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VOL. VI. \$2.50
a Year.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY BEADLE AND ADAMS,
No. 98 William Street, New York.

Price, Five Cents. No. 76.



"MISS TAYLOR, MY SON IS WAITING FOR YOU TO BEGIN."

BECAUSE SHE LOVED HIM; Or, HOW WILL IT END?

BY ALICE FLEMING.

CHAPTER I.

MIDNIGHT in Paris: a cold, raw wind driving

through the streets; a thick, fine rain falling from the leaden sky; sounds of life and motion in all directions; for when does a great city find time to sleep?

Through the night air, ringing out clearly and distinctly above the many mingled sounds, came the tones of a woman's voice, singing a simple English ballad.

It was not a very powerful voice, nor was its

compass anything remarkable; and the song was one which any school-girl might safely have attempted; but it was exquisitely sweet and full, every word was perfectly intoned. Still, the principal charm lay in its wonderful pathos—now rending the heart by its wild agony, now almost melting to tears by its infinite softness and tenderness.

Slightly apart from the motley crowd by which she was surrounded stood a tall, slight man, wrapped in a long dark cloak. Why he remained there, listening to the street singer, he hardly knew. He was no lover of music, but some strange attraction seemed to have drawn him thither, and to keep him there as though chained to the spot.

The song ended, she who had sung it turned toward her audience, holding out her hand in a manner half-shrinking, half-defiant. But those who before had crowded and pushed, so as to stand as near to her as possible, now moved away.

The crowd dispersed, and a few copper coins were all that she had received.

With a heavy sigh, she drew her threadbare shawl more closely round her, and was about leaving the spot, when the man in the long cloak stepped forward, and slipped a piece of gold into her hand. The thin fingers closed eagerly over it.

"Heaven bless you!" she murmured, and hurried away.

At that moment, the pale yellow light of a street-lamp fell full on her young, but pale and worn, countenance.

Those two had met before; but the recognition was on his side only, and, hardened man of the world though he was, he shuddered as he remembered how and when he had seen that fair, innocent-looking young girl.

His first impulse was to follow her; but he soon gave up the attempt as useless. Several figures were flitting backward and forward, any one of which might easily be mistaken for hers in the semi-darkness.

"Shall we ever meet again?" he wondered, as he slowly retraced his steps in the direction of his hotel.

Meanwhile, the object of his reflections was hurrying through a labyrinth of back streets.

To her he had seemed an angel of mercy, and more than once she repeated, "Heaven bless him!" as she thought of the many comforts which his gift would enable her to procure for one who was everything to her.

At last she reached a large, dilapidated-looking house, one of those mansions which formerly had been the abode of wealth and fashion, but now let out in single rooms to some of the poorest inhabitants of Paris.

Dragging her weary feet up flight after flight of broken stairs, she paused for a few moments on a narrow landing to gather breath;

then opening a door, entered a small attic, through which a solitary candle diffused a dim, uncertain light.

A table, one or two chairs, and a low pallet-bed were all the furniture contained in that miserable room. And on the bed lay a man, pale and motionless.

The girl's light step seemed to rouse him. The heavy lids were slowly raised, and he faintly smiled.

"Father!" she whispered, bending lovingly over him.

"Eva, my child," he said, speaking slowly and with difficulty, "why did you remain out so long? I was afraid that something might have happened to you."

"I am very sorry; but I could not help it. I did not want to come back empty-handed. See what I have brought!"

And she held up the napoleon.

"Where did you get that, Eva?"

"I sung in the streets, and a kind gentleman gave it to me."

"Sung in the streets? Oh, Eva! you must never do that again! It was very, very wrong of you!"

"Our money was all gone, father, and I could think of no other way of getting more."

"So we are come to that; and it is all my fault!" he groaned.

"Don't fret, father! Try to sleep now for a while."

"Sleep?—no, not yet. You are tired, and need rest, my child. But there is something I must tell you now, or it may be too late."

Eva pressed her hands more tightly together; her lips quivered, but there was no other sign of emotion.

It was not now only that she learned that his days, perhaps his very hours, were numbered, and that ere long she must be thrown, alone and friendless, on a hard, pitiless world.

"Eva," he continued, and his voice was so low and indistinct that she had to bend her head close over his in order to catch his words, "you know something of what my life has been. You know of one dark stain which rests on it, and yet your love for me has never changed. But when you have learnt all, you will turn from me in scorn and hatred; will never think of me save to curse my memory."

"Never shall I do that, father!" Eva interrupted, earnestly. "No matter what you may have been to the rest of the world, I shall know always what you were to me—the kindest and dearest of fathers."

"Poor child! you little imagine, and shall not be undeceived, until I am no more. As long as I live, I would have you love me. Now, take this key, unlock my desk, and bring me what you will find in the under part."

The girl did as desired, and laid a small sealed package beside him.

"This will explain all, Eva," he said. "You see the address."

She took the package, and holding it near the light, read aloud:

"Sir Henry Tremayne, The Elms, Darkshire, England."

"Sir Henry Tremayne and I are first cousins—brother's children; and my real name is Tremayne, not Taylor. Henry's parents, as well as mine, died when we were quite children, and our grandfather—old Sir Mark—reared us both.

"My father was the younger, but the favorite son. None of the property was entailed, and it had been our grandfather's intention to divide it equally between him and his brother, and so I grew up, believing myself to be joint heir with Henry.

"My cousin and I were of the same age. He had one sister, a year or two older than himself, and we were all very good friends; though, to tell the truth, I never really cared much for her, she was so cold, selfish, and proud, always thinking of what would be for her own advantage; and very glad indeed I was when she married and went to live elsewhere. As to the old man, I believe he was really fond of us; but he was remarkably strict, always making rules which it was almost impossible to obey, and punishing the least offense, real or imaginary, in the severest manner.

"Henry was a good, steady lad, and it was much easier for him than for me to obey our grandfather's iron rule. As I grew older, I found obedience harder and harder. He was one who would brook no contradiction, and constant altercations took place between us.

"At last, one day, when I was about nineteen, I defied our grandfather openly; and he declared that if I did not go down on my knees and beg his pardon, he would disinherit me. But I was reckless, and laughed at him.

"'I was going to leave half of my property to your father,' he said, his voice trembling with suppressed passion, 'and always intended that you should take his place. I have absolute control over it, and can dispose of it as I please, and not a single penny shall come to you unless you change the line of conduct you have adopted.'

"But I was young and high-spirited, with an intense desire for adventure. What was the prospect of inheriting the old man's money, when compared with liberty? So I ran away from home, and enlisted in a regiment which had just been ordered abroad.

"I changed my name to Taylor, and no one suspected that I was a baronet's grandson.

"I had always believed that the life of a sailor was unalloyed enjoyment; but I soon found out my mistake. The low companions with whom I was forced to associate, what I

imagined the insolence of my superior officers, and the strict discipline to which I was forced to submit, were very hard to bear. But I knew that there was no help for it, and worked on doggedly, until I had almost lost sight of my real identity in that of Mark Taylor, the private soldier.

"When I had served my time, I thought I would return home, and find out how things had been going on during my absence. All there was changed. My grandfather was dead, and Henry was in possession of the title and property.

"When I saw him so rich and prosperous, a fierce jealousy sprung up in my heart. Half of what he possessed had once been intended for me, and would certainly have been mine had I not quarreled with grandfather.

"I consulted some lawyers as to whether there was any chance of my recovering what I considered to be my rights. They all told me that it would be madness to attempt it.

"At last I found an attorney who was willing to take up the case. Whether he was more a fool or a knave I do not know; but he persuaded me that he could prove that half the property had been settled on my father, and that my grandfather had no right to alienate it from me. I was only too delighted to believe him, and commence a lawsuit forthwith.

"Henry offered me a large sum of money if I would give up my pretensions. That only served to strengthen me in the delusion that he believed I would succeed.

"I was determined to have every thing or nothing. Not even the thought of my young wife and my child could induce me to accept a compromise. So we went to law. The verdict was given in Henry's favor, and the costs of the case swallowed up the little money I had possessed, the hard-earned savings of years.

"Do not ask me how my wife met me when I returned to her, and told her that I had lost every thing. That is a time of which I can hardly bear to think.

"She died; beside her grave I vowed vengeance on my cousin, and kept my word. He never suspected who desolated his home and turned his cup of happiness to gall and wormwood. But I have written a full confession of my crime. And you must go to him, and place this package in his hands, and tell him that remorse for what I then did followed me to my last moments.

"You thought that our money was exhausted; but in my desk you will find sufficient for your journey to England. Poor as we were, I was determined not to touch what I had laid by for that purpose.

"You need have no concern for your future; I have taken care to secure that, and you will never know what poverty is again.

"When my cousin reads what I have written, he will curse me.

"I do not ask for pardon. That he can never grant me. I have sinned against him too deeply to expect forgiveness. The name of Mark Tremayne will be branded with infamy; but none of the shame will fall on you, darling. The sin is mine alone, and so are its fruits. And, oh! the sting of a guilty conscience has brought me the punishment I have deserved!

"When you are rich, and happy, and prosperous, think of me sometimes with pity, and remember that the one pure and holy feeling of my heart was my love for you. Yes, Eva, and that love was very selfish. It has cast a dark shadow over your life, which I fear no future sunshine can entirely remove; but believe me, no father ever loved his child more intensely than I have loved you."

He ceased speaking; his eyes closed, and soon his heavy breathing told that he slept.

Eva did not move from her place beside him. She was thinking over the story which she had just heard.

What was the secret of that package? What fearful revelation did it contain, that it should make her shrink from the father whom she so dearly loved? And should her hand lift the veil which shrouded that mystery? Should she add to the dishonor which covered his name? No—a thousand times, no!

The confession contained in that package should never be read by mortal eye—least of all, by that of Sir Henry Tremayne.

While thus she mused, the gray, weird light of early dawn crept into the room. Ghost-like shadows hovered round, and gradually disappeared into the darkest corners.

The candle, which had burned deep down into the socket, flickered and went out. The weary, sin-stained spirit had fled.

CHAPTER II.

"I SAY, Grantham, who is that girl playing the accompaniment for your sister?"

Philip Grantham turned his head quickly.

"I was just on the point of asking you the same question," he said.

"Then you do not know her? How strange!"

"My good fellow, I only arrived in London this afternoon, and have not been here more than half an hour. You certainly cannot expect me to know every lady in the room."

"But I must find out who this one is," said the first speaker, a stylish-looking young guardsman. "She is perfectly lovely! A little pale, perhaps; but her figure and features are faultless. And her hair! Did you ever see more beautiful golden? What a pity she is so badly dressed!"

"She seems to be in deep mourning."

"So she is; but mourning can be made to look more pretty and becoming than that. However, I must go and find out all about her."

He began to work his way through the crowded drawing-room in the direction of the group which surrounded the stately form of the hostess; while Philip Grantham remained standing in the same place, his looks fixed on the girl seated at the piano.

Presently the young man rejoined him.

"Prepare yourself for a disenchantment, old fellow!" he said. "She whom we were inclined to fancy was some new social star is nobody, after all, but a Miss Taylor, your little sister's new governess. They only let her in here because it is convenient to have some one who plays accompaniments well."

"If I were Mrs. Grantham, I would keep her in the school-room," said an elderly lady, who had been listening to the conversation. "I never allow my children's governess to appear when we have company. I consider that the drawing-room is no fit place for her."

Philip Grantham turned away with an impatient movement, and approached the piano just as his sister was finishing her song.

She was a tall, showy-looking girl, with dark hair and eyes and a brilliant complexion, which some three or four London seasons had failed to injure. A beauty, an heiress, it seemed strange that at the age of twenty-three she should still be unmarried. Many admired her immensely for a short time; but it was generally acknowledged that she did not improve on acquaintance; and her cold, haughty manner seldom failed to repel those whom her beauty and wealth had attracted.

"You here?" she exclaimed, in surprise, as she saw her brother. "Why, we all supposed you were in Norway!"

"And so I was until a few days ago," Philip answered. "I only arrived in London this afternoon."

"How good of you to come here! Have you seen mamma?"

"Yes. She tells me that you return to Eastgrove after to-morrow."

"We do; the season is just over. Are you coming with us?"

"I think not; but I will follow you in a few weeks."

"I am so glad to leave town!" Mabel said, with a suppressed yawn.

"Have you not been enjoying yourself?"

"Oh, yes; but I am nearly worn out."

"You do not look so." Then he added, in a low voice: "What about Lord Cosgrave, Mabel?—has he been much here?"

"No; we have seen little or nothing of him. When last I heard of him, he was in Paris."

"I wish he would stay there!"

"Why so?" asked Mabel, with an angry look.

"Because he is a man with whose name I do not care to hear that of my sister coupled."

"And I do not care to be interfered with by you!" Mabel answered.

He made no reply, but turned away with a pained look on his face. Experience had already taught him that any interference with his sister was perfectly useless.

Just then Mrs. Grantham joined them, and asked Philip to sing something.

"Please do, to oblige me!" she said, as he was about to refuse. "We have so few musical people here this evening; nearly all those I counted on have disappointed me. Mabel has been obliged to make such a martyr of herself."

"I suppose I must, then," he said, looking anything but well pleased.

"Thanks so much! Here are some of your songs. This one, you say? Miss Taylor, my son is waiting for you to begin."

The governess bowed her head mutely, and resumed her seat before the instrument; but the angry flush which mantled her cheek did not escape Philip's notice.

"Poor girl!" he thought; "wha a miserable life hers must be!"

And his eyes wandered pityingly from her pale, sad face, to her dress of deepest mourning.

The song ended, he bent over her, and whispered, "I am very much obliged to you. You played that capitally; but you look very tired! You must come with me, and let me get you some refreshment."

Once more she colored, this time not in anger, and her tears seemed ready to flow. Words of kindness were rarely given to Eva Taylor now.

"Please come!" continued Philip. "Do not mind our not having been formally introduced. I should be neglecting my duty if I were to let a lady in my mother's house want for anything."

She hesitated for a moment, and half rose.

"Play this, if you please, Miss Taylor."

The words, spoken in Mrs. Grantham's haughtiest tone, made them both start. Another song was placed on the piano; and with knitted brows Philip watched the small white hands as they struggled to keep time with the very *ad libitum* style in which a retired naval officer sung, or rather shouted, a ditty which certainly was very little suited to a London drawing-room.

"If I can do anything to help her, I will!" he thought; "but I must be very careful. If my mother sees that I interest myself on her account, it will only make mischief."

Philip Grantham was right. His mother was fully determined to keep the governess in her proper place; and just then she was regretting having brought her into the drawing-room at all that evening.

Several of the gentlemen present had inquired who she was in a manner which plainly showed how her appearance had interested them; and the supercilious reply, "She is only my governess," had not deterred more than one from requesting an introduction.

"Miss Taylor does not expect to be introduced to any one," she had answered each time, in tones that would admit of no remonstrance.

And she had begun to hope that no more notice would be taken of the governess.

Very angry indeed she felt when she saw how her son lingered by the piano, and observed the polite, deferential manner in which he spoke to Eva. As soon as possible she interrupted the conversation by requiring Miss Taylor to play another accompaniment; and scarcely had the last notes died away, when she was told that she might retire, as her services would not be needed any more at present.

Mrs. Grantham was the widow of a rich country gentleman. Out of a large family but three children survived—Philip and Mabel, the two eldest, and Janie, the youngest, a girl about twelve.

Wishing to procure a foreign governess for this child, she had written to a distant cousin, who held an English chaplaincy in Paris, to request his assistance. Mr. Stuard had accidentally discovered the Taylors, and had shown them no little kindness. On her father's death Eva had asked him to help her to find a situation, and he had proposed her to Mrs. Grantham. A young English lady, who had passed nearly all her life on the Continent, and was a good linguist and musician, seemed very suitable; and on Mr. Stuard's recommendation Eva was engaged forthwith.

Eva had never flattered herself that the life of a governess would be an agreeable one; still she was quite unprepared for the haughty coldness with which she was treated. Her pupil did not seem to her a very interesting child, delicate, backward, and rather self-willed, and the hours passed in the dull monotony of the school-room were insufferably long and wearisome to her.

It was rather an agreeable surprise when one evening, about a month after her arrival, she received a message requesting her presence in the drawing-room; but she soon was made painfully aware of the fact that it was infinitely preferable to pass her free time in the solitude of her own room to being admitted on sufferance among a number of people who looked on her as their inferior, and very thankful indeed she felt when the moment of her release had come.

Utterly lonely and miserable, she sunk on her knees beside her bed, and sobbed as though her heart would break.

"Father, oh, father!" she moaned; "why did I not die with you?—why did you leave me alone in this cruel, wretched world?"

Carefully hidden in her trunk lay the sealed package which, placed in the hands of Sir Henry Tremayne, would, she had been told, secure her wealth and position.

But she had never wavered in her determination to shield her father's memory by the sacrifice of herself.

CHAPTER III.

EASTGROVE, the family property of the Granthams, lay in one of the western shires.

Philip passed little of his time there; and it was an understood thing that as long as he remained unmarried his mother and sisters were to consider it as their home.

A noble old place it certainly was. Terraced gardens and smooth greensward, dotted with oaks of unknown antiquity, surrounded the stately mansion; while in the distance might be had glimpses of the river, gleaming and glittering in the warm sunshine, and winding like a silver thread among the wood-covered hills which bounded the horizon.

A fairer picture could scarcely be imagined than that which met the view of Eva Taylor as she stood by the school-room window one July afternoon; but the soft, peaceful beauty of the landscape possessed no charm for her. The gay songs of the birds grated harshly on her ears; and the bright summer sunshine seemed only to mock at her sadness.

What was all the loveliness of the outer world to her? Mere beauty of scenery could bring no comfort to a lonely, grief-stricken heart!

The sound of the luncheon-bell awoke her from her gloomy thoughts; and she turned slowly away from the window.

Silently and unnoticed the young governess entered the handsomely furnished dining-room, and took her place at the table. She and her pupil dined at Mrs. Grantham's luncheon hour, and that was almost the only time when Eva came in contact with the mistress and her eldest daughter.

To-day there was a strange gentleman sitting at the opposite side of the table, whom Eva heard Mrs. Grantham address as Lord Cosgrave.

He was a man of about five-and-thirty, with a dark, handsome countenance, which, however, was rendered almost disagreeable by the cold, cynical expression which it constantly wore.

Looking up suddenly, Eva met his gaze. It was fixed on her with mingled surprise and in-

quiry. He turned away his head, and continued the animated conversation in which Mabel had engaged him.

She did not venture to look at him again; but she knew that he was watching her, and a vague, undefined feeling of dread began to creep over her, together with a consciousness that she had seen him before, where and when she could not recall.

"Janie is to come for a drive with me at once, Miss Taylor," said Mrs. Grantham, as they rose from the table, "so you can spend the afternoon as you please."

"I will get a book, and find some nice quiet place in the grounds where I can sit and read!" thought Eva.

Deep down in the park, shaded from the hot rays of the July sun by the thick, overhanging branches of a clump of lime-trees, she found a small rustic seat, and, sitting down, opened her book; but it lay on her knees unheeded, the light breeze blowing the leaves backward and forward.

Further and further back wandered her thoughts; one scene after another of the wild, vagrant existence which she had led with her father rose before her mind.

She shuddered, and pressed her hands to her eyes, as though to shut out some dark memory, some specter of the past. A low, frightened cry escaped her lips. Now she knew why Lord Cosgrave's features had seemed familiar. Was it possible that he remembered her? Her heart almost stood still at the thought.

"Well, really, what a pretty picture!"

She looked up. Lord Cosgrave was standing before her.

Every trace of color left, and her frightened looks were fixed on him.

"I see you have not forgotten me, Miss Taylor!" he said, sitting down beside her, and laying his hand on hers with an air of familiarity.

She sprung to her feet, and fled along the narrow path as fast as her trembling limbs would permit; but he was by her side in a moment, and she felt his strong, firm grasp on her arm.

In vain did she try to shake off his hand; he only laughed at her feeble efforts.

"Come, now, Miss Taylor, that is hardly kind!" he said. "I take the trouble of looking for you all through the park, in order to renew our acquaintance, and this is the way you treat me!"

"Have you no pity?" she exclaimed. "Am I not wretched and friendless enough without your coming to persecute me?"

"Persecute you? Why should you imagine that I intend to do any such thing? I assure you I never felt more inclined to be on good terms with any one than I do with you."

"Then why are you here?"

"Come back to the seat; I want to talk to you."

She suffered him to lead her back, and mechanically resumed her place.

"Are you afraid of me?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Is there any need for you to ask? Would Mrs. Grantham keep me in her house, or would it be possible for me to find another situation, if you were to tell what you know?"

"Then you have not acquainted Mrs. Grantham with a certain part of your father's history?"

"No; why should I? She has never condescended to ask me any questions about him."

"Who recommended you to her?"

"An English clergyman who used to visit my father when he was ill."

"How long has your father been dead?"

"Not two months," she answered, trying to force back the rising tears.

"And did this clergyman you speak of know that it was a mere accident which saved your father from being an assassin?"

"No."

"Did he know that you used to sing in the streets of Paris for money every night?"

Eva started violently.

"I only did that once," she exclaimed.

"Really," he answered, incredulously, "how strange that I should have had the pleasure of meeting you on that one particular occasion!"

"You met me! I do not remember. Stay! you certainly are not the gentleman who gave me the napoleon?"

"I am."

Greatly ashamed and mortified she felt. This man had given her money, as he would have given it to any ordinary beggar, and she had thankfully accepted his charity!

"I want to hear," continued Lord Cosgrave, "if this clergyman friend you have told me about knew of the nights—I beg your pardon, I should say of the *night*—that you spent singing in the streets?"

"No," Eva answered, in a low voice.

"Then I presume you have not told Mrs. Grantham about it either?"

"No. Could I possibly tell her? You know her quite well enough to understand that she would not keep me here another hour if she were told that."

"I dare say you are right. Ladies do not generally care to have a street-singer as the governess of their children."

His words and tone stung her to the quick.

"Are you a gentleman?" she demanded, in a voice trembling with anger and mortification. Are you a gentleman? I have done nothing to be ashamed of. My father was dying; we had not a single franc left in the

world. If I could have earned money in any other way I would willingly have done so; but I could not leave him. He would hardly hear me a minute out of his sight. One evening I had to go out—shall I tell you where?—to the Mont de Piete to pawn a little brooch which had been given to me years ago. It was my only trinket, and I was very fond of it. But we were starving, and I thought that it might procure me a few francs. When I gave it to the man, he laughed, and said that it was not gold at all, and not worth more than a few sous. On my way back, it struck me that I might get something if I were to sing, and I had heard of money being made that way. So I tried, and sung for a long time; but in vain. The people came to listen to me; but they hardly gave me anything, until—"

She paused, and he said, in a kinder, gentler tone, "I am very glad that I was able to help you, and do not fancy that I think less of you for what you have done; but you must not be angry if I speak very plainly. You have entered Mrs. Grantham's employment under false colors. You must acknowledge that. Granted she never asked you any questions, yet you are tacitly deceiving her; and do you not think that it is my duty, as an intimate friend of the family, to acquaint her with what I know both about your father and yourself?"

"Stop!—in mercy, stop!" she cried. "Have you no pity? What harm have I done you that you should have me turned out of her house in disgrace—that you should deprive me of my only means of support? And but for me, you would not now be here to tell the tale. You must know that."

"I owe you my sincerest gratitude, Miss Taylor; but for you, your father would have been my assassin!"

"I know that I am completely in your power," Eva continued, hardly appearing to hear him; "but what object can you have in destroying me? What harm can my remaining here do to any one? Indeed, I will try to perform my duty toward my pupil, and there is nothing more required of me. Spare me now, as I once stood between you and destruction!"

"You are right," he answered, slowly. "I ought not to forget that you saved my life that night in Baden-Baden. It was a fearful moment; the knife flashing before my sight, and your father furious. I had given myself up for lost, when you rushed in, and caught his arm. Had you delayed one moment longer, you would have been too late."

"Thank Heaven that I was able to shield you!" Eva said.

"Miss Taylor"—and Lord Cosgrave fixed

on her an inquiring look—"do you know why your father attempted my life?"

"No."

"Did he never tell you?"

"No; he said that you were his enemy, and that you had insulted him. That is all."

"And you believed him, I suppose?"

"Certainly."

"That was not his true reason, I assure you."

"What was it then?"

"I will not tell you. He doubtless remembered the proverb, 'Dead men tell no tales. But we are wandering from our subject. You were, I believe, asking me to say nothing about you to Mrs. Grantham; but I don't think I can promise you that.'"

"Why not? Does it make the least difference to you who teaches her child? And to me it makes the difference between being able to earn my own bread, and being turned out a homeless outcast on the world."

"I do not want to be hard on you, Miss Taylor; only I must do my duty as Mrs. Grantham's friend."

"I can appeal to nothing but your pity, my lord. Think of what would become of me if I were to lose my place! I have not a friend to whom I could turn for help. It surely could be no crime in you to let a friendless, homeless girl support herself by honest work. If your heart is not made of stone, you will spare me!"

He smiled, and it was well for Eva that she did not see that smile.

"I cannot give you any decided promise," he said, slowly, "except that for the present, at all events, I will keep silence. It shall be our secret—yours and mine."

She drew a long sigh of relief.

"Oh, my lord, I hardly know how to thank you!" she murmured.

"Then give me your hand, and tell me that you will trust me," he said.

She placed her hand in his: he retained it for a moment, then raised it to his lips.

With an angry exclamation, she snatched it away.

Lord Cosgrave laughed.

"I can tell you that Miss Mabel would not glare so at me if I were to kiss her hand," he said.

Instead of answering, she rose, and began to walk quickly in the direction of the house.

"Are you angry with me?" he asked, overtaking her, and walking by her side.

"I am."

"I really did not mean to vex you. Will you forgive me, and let us be friends?"

"How can there be friendship between us, my lord? Remember that you are a nobleman; while I am nothing better than a servant."

"Friends or enemies, Miss Taylor—take your choice."

Eva trembled, and turned pale.

Just then, steps were heard approaching.

"I will leave you now," he said. "It would not do for us to be seen here together. But remember that what I know remains a secret only so long as I shall choose to continue silent."

He disappeared behind the trees, and scarcely was he out of sight when, round a turn of the walk, appeared Mabel Grantham.

CHAPTER IV.

THE two girls stood opposite each other in silence. Eva's looks were fixed on the ground, while Mabel was watching the governess's flushed cheeks and trembling hands, which were playing nervously with one of the crape folds of her dress.

"I hardly expected to find *you* here, Miss Taylor," she said, presently. "Have you been exploring the park?"

"I? I had nothing to do, as Janie went out with her mother," stammered Eva; "so I came here to read."

"I do not see any book."

"My book? Oh, I must have left it on the seat. I will go back for it."

She turned and hastily retraced her steps, Mabel following.

The book was not on the seat, but was lying on the ground beside it. Eva picked it up, and began to smooth out the crumpled leaves.

"May I inquire who your companion was, Miss Taylor?" inquired Mabel, watching her suspiciously.

Eva looked quite as guilty as she felt, and her confusion did not escape Mabel.

"Well," she repeated, "who was with you here?"

"I was by myself, Miss Grantham."

It was the first direct untruth which she remembered ever having told, and she spoke it falteringly, and with difficulty.

"Really," said Mabel, incredulously, "I was quite certain that I heard voices as I came along."

"Have Mrs. Grantham and Janie returned yet?" asked Eva, anxious to change the subject.

"Yes; they came home more than half an hour ago."

"Then I must hurry back."

"It would be no harm for you to do so; and, indeed, I believe some of the servants have been sent to look for you. Our uncle has driven over from the Elms to see us. Janie is a great pet of his, and he has been asking for her governess."

"The Elms?" exclaimed Eva, starting back.

"Yes; do you find anything strange in the name?"

"No; I was thinking of The Elms—a place in Darkshire."

"Then it must be the same. We are on the borders of Darkshire here."

"And your uncle is?"

"Sir Henry Tremayne."

How Eva reached the house she hardly knew. Her brain seemed to whirl round, and she found it impossible to collect her thoughts. But one idea was uppermost in her mind—she was about to meet the man whom her father had so greatly wronged, between whose life and her own there was so mysterious a link.

As in a dream she followed Mabel to the drawing-room. She knew that Mrs. Grantham was speaking to her, and that her voice sounded less cold than usual; but had not the faintest idea what she was saying.

Then she felt her hand cordially grasped, and heard a kind, manly voice say, "I am very happy to make your acquaintance, Miss Taylor! My visit to-day is intended principally for you."

"You are very kind," she said; and looked up.

She saw a tall, spare figure, slightly bent; a countenance which must once have been very handsome, but now deeply furrowed with care, and with an expression of settled melancholy. His hair was white as snow, yet Eva knew that he could hardly have passed his fiftieth year, and a bitter pain shot through her heart as she fully realized, for the first time, what a wreck that unknown crime of her father's must have made of his cousin's life.

"My sister has promised to let Janie come over to luncheon to-morrow, and spend the rest of the day with me, Miss Taylor," Sir Henry said. "You must come too, and I will promise to do my best not to let you find the society of an old man stupid."

"It is never stupid at The Elms, uncle Henry," said Janie, passing her hand through his arm. "You always make the time pass so quickly. I am very glad we are going there to-morrow."

The door opened, and Lord Cosgrave sauntered into the room. The greeting between him and Sir Henry Tremayne was formal and distant in the extreme. He did not take the least notice of Eva, but began to talk in a low voice to Mabel.

"I hope you had a pleasant walk in the park this afternoon?" Eva heard her say.

"What do you mean? I was not there at all," was the reply.

"You surprise me. I thought I saw you going down in that direction after luncheon."

"Yes; I did go down in that direction, as I wanted to go home across the fields; but I was not in the park," he answered.

"Home! You certainly do not mean to tell

me that you walked to Woodlawn and back this hot day?" said Mabel, fixing her black eyes on his face.

"I do mean to tell you that I walked there and back," he answered, smiling.

"And left your horse standing in the stable?"

"Yes; is there anything so strange in that? It is over six miles by the road, and only one and a half across the fields."

"You have often ridden across the fields?"

"By taking several fences; but Stella hurt her foot the other day, and I did not care to make her jump."

Mabel said no more; but it seemed to Eva that she did not look convinced.

Lord Cosgrave's property adjoined that of the Granthams.

Woodlawn was one of the finest places in the neighborhood; and, when the young nobleman had come of age, his rent-roll was a very large one; but some ten or fifteen years of reckless dissipation and extravagance had left his affairs in a state of almost hopeless embarrassment.

There seemed but one way of saving him from ruin—a rich marriage; and for some time past he had seriously thought of proposing to Mabel Grantham. But to-day a better prospect had opened before him; and he turned his steps homeward with a triumphant smile.

"I must contrive to be better acquainted with that little governess," he said to himself. "She is not one to stand any nonsense, I feel sure of that, and I like her all the better for it; but at any rate, I know how to make her treat me civilly. There certainly is a strong flavor of romance about the whole business, but I must take care that I am not running after a will-o'-the-wisp; that would be rather awkward, with the Jews closing round me like a set of harpies. Why is not Mabel Grantham like her? I could be sure of a good round sum in that quarter, without any further difficulty. Mabel—bah!—I know that that young lady would be only too delighted to become Lady Cosgrave if I chose to ask her, and will be rather disappointed if I do not. But if I were to marry any one from choice, it would be the governess!"

Then he laughed aloud.

"I do believe I am falling in love," he thought, "but certainly I cannot do better than sift this matter to the utmost; and if I am right, I may yet save the old castle from coming to the hammer, and have a charming wife into the bargain."

And he reined in his horse on the top of a hill, and surveyed the castellated building, just visible among the trees of the demesne which lay before him.

Neither pupil nor teacher paid much attention to their tasks next morning. Janie's thoughts were fully occupied with the anticipated pleasure of a visit to The Elms; while her governess was unusually nervous and disturbed, and found it impossible to fix her attention on her uncongenial work.

"Can I trust him? Will he betray me?" was the thought which had racked her brain through the long hours of a sleepless night, and which now made her tremble and start at every unexpected sound. The words, "Remember that what I know remains a secret only so long as I choose to continue silent," echoed, and re-echoed in her ears, and she saw how completely she was at this man's mercy.

At first she had been inclined to believe him when he said that he had been induced to speak to her as he had done by his sense of duty toward Mrs. Grantbam; but now the conviction was gradually strengthening in her mind that his principal object had been to frighten her ~~and to make her feel his power over her~~ his principal object had been to frighten her, and to make her feel his power over her.

Then would come the remembrance of meeting with Mabel Grantbam, and the knowledge that the young lady's suspicions had been aroused. The evident pleasure with which she received Lord Cosgrave's attentions had not escaped the notice of Eva, who felt sure that she would be closely watched in future.

"It is nearly one o'clock, Miss Taylor; you might really let me stop now," exclaimed Janie, suddenly closing her book, and pushing her chair back from the table.

"Very well," Eva answered; "half an hour more or less cannot make a great deal of difference for one day."

"What is the matter with you, Miss Taylor?" Janie asked, looking curiously at her governess. "Do you not want to go to The Elms to-day?"

"There is nothing the matter!" she answered, almost sharply; "and, of course, I am very much obliged to your uncle for his invitation." She rose, and, standing by the window, rested her head on her hand. "How will it all end?—shall I ever be free from this mystery and deceit?" she asked herself.

"And a voice seemed to answer: 'Never!'"

In about an hour Eva and Janie started for The Elms, which was only a few miles distant from Eastgrove.

"So this was once my father's home?" thought Eva, as the carriage rolled up the long avenue, and stopped before a low, irregular house, rather out of repair.

The shutters of many of the windows were closed, the walls discolored, and partly covered with ivy and other creeping plants, and the whole place had an uncared-for and neglected

appearance. Still it was a lovely spot, more picturesque perhaps in its desolation than it had been when the hand of man had ruled supreme. Now nature alone bore sway, and a lover of wild, untamed beauty would have reveled in the unchecked luxuriance of the scene.

Sir Henry was waiting at the hall door to receive them. He gave them a cordial welcome, and brought them into a small but comfortably furnished dining-room, where luncheon was prepared.

Nothing could have been more friendly than his manner to Eva, but she felt awkward and constrained; his kindness only served to make her utterly miserable, and never had the burden of her father's unknown crime weighed more heavily on her.

"If he only knew!" she thought. "It seems so base and hypocritical to accept his hospitality, and yet what can I do?"

"Would you care for a row up the river, Miss Taylor?" Sir Henry asked, when luncheon was over.

"Oh, yes, please, uncle!" exclaimed Janie, eagerly answering for her governess. "I am sure she would enjoy it; I have been telling her how lovely it is."

They went down together to the place where the boat was moored, and soon were skimming along the smooth, clear surface of the river, the powerful strokes of the boatmen impelling them rapidly against the current.

"This is almost my only amusement, Miss Taylor," said Sir Henry. "Every fine afternoon I spend some hours on the water. And, indeed, the weather must be very severe that can keep me altogether from it."

"Do you remain all the year at The Elms?" she asked.

"I rarely leave it now. Years ago I traveled, until variety lost its charms for me. Now I almost lead the life of a recluse, my only companions my books and my boat."

There was a tone of intense sadness in his look and voice as he said this, and Eva bent her head low over the side of the boat, in order to hide the tears which she could not restrain.

"When I grow up, uncle, I will come to live with you," said Janie; "you will not be so lonely then."

"You would find me rather dull company, poor child!" he said, with a smile. "It does very well to come to me for an afternoon now and then, but you would soon grow tired of living here."

"I think not," Janie said; "and you know I love the river quite as much as you do."

Sir Henry was by no means a melancholy companion. Rousing himself, as if by an effort, he spoke on various subjects. Gradually

Eva's restraint vanished, and she found herself talking to him quite freely. Once he asked her some trivial question about her past life, but when he saw her look of pain he dropped the subject at once, and afterward carefully avoided any allusion to it.

A change seemed to have come over Janie; she was not like the same child as when at home, she was so gay and affectionate in her manner toward her uncle.

"I thought her stupid and uninteresting," Eva said to herself; "but I suppose the fault was mine, because I did not understand her. I only tried to do my duty toward her, but now I mean to make her love me."

"We have nearly an hour before dinner," said Sir Henry, as they were returning to the house. "What had we better do?"

"Let us go to the portrait-gallery," said Janie; "I never get tired of looking at the grand old knights and beautiful ladies there."

So to the portrait-gallery they went. It was a long, narrow chamber, extending along one entire wing of the house. Knights in their coats of mail, gallants in court dress, stately dames and fair young beauties, looked down on them from their canvas frames.

To Janie they all seemed like old friends; she had some remark to make about each, or some incidents in their lives to tell.

"How do you know so much about these people, who were dead long years before you were born?" her uncle asked at last.

"I make Mrs. Jones tell me," answered Janie, looking very wise.

"That is my grandfather," said Sir Henry, pausing as they reached the middle of the gallery.

With eager interest Eva examined the stern visage of the old baronet; his broad, high forehead, heavy brows, cold gray eyes and tightly-drawn mouth, filled her with a feeling almost akin to fear.

"Is your portrait here?" she asked, turning to Sir Henry.

"There I am; would you recognize me?"

She saw before her two lads, apparently about the same age, standing arm-in-arm, a large mastiff lying on the ground at their feet. They were very like each other, but the looks of the one were thoughtful and earnest, those of the other bright and restless.

"That is meant for you," she said, pointing to the former.

"Yes; and the other one is my cousin, Mark. We parted in anger years ago, and I have heard nothing whatever of him since. He, probably, is dead, and I am the last of my name."

Little did he think that the girl standing beside him was a scion of his ancient race.

CHAPTER V.

"If you please, Sir Henry, your steward wants to speak to you for a few minutes," said the Baronet's housekeeper, appearing at the door of the gallery.

"Very well, Mrs. Jones," he answered; "tell him I am coming." Then turning to Eva and Janie, he added: "Will you excuse me for a short time? There are some portraits at the other side which Miss Taylor has not yet seen; perhaps she might care to look at them."

"Come this way," said Janie, laying her hand on her governess's arm as soon as her uncle was out of sight. "There is a room here I want so much to see."

She drew her toward a room at the further end of the gallery. There was a key in the lock; turning it, she went in, Eva following her.

They found themselves in a small, square room, the only furniture of which was an arm-chair and a table. Three of the walls were covered with well-filled book-shelves; on the fourth hung the portrait of a lovely young woman, dressed in a simple white dress, her only ornament a spray of white jessamine on her breast. She was bending over a cradle, in which lay a child, several months old; its face was radiant with smiles, and its plump hands had clutched one of the long, golden curls of its mother's hair.

"Those are his wife and child," whispered Janie; "I wanted to see them so much, but he never lets any one but Mrs. Jones come in here. She knew his wife, and told me that Lady Tremayne was the most beautiful young creature to be found anywhere."

"And what became of her?"

"She and the baby died about a year after that picture was painted, and he has never recovered the shock. He comes up here every day, he says to read, but Mrs. Jones believes he is grieving for his wife, and thinking over the past."

"Did she die suddenly?" Eva asked, her interest fully aroused.

"I don't know. I never could get any one to tell me about her, except Mrs. Jones, and she does not like speaking of her. I asked mamma once what happened to her, but she got very angry, and told me that I was a naughty, inquisitive child, so I was afraid ever to say anything more."

"Is she not lovely? How afflicting it must have been to him to lose her!" Eva said, pityingly.

"Far worse than death!"

Both started. It was Sir Henry who had said that, and he was standing beside them.

"Why did you come in here, Janie?" he asked, sternly, with a look of anger in his eyes which she had never seen there before.

"Oh, uncle, I am so sorry if you are angry; but I wanted so much to see the picture, and—"

"You thought that I should never know anything about it?" he interrupted. "I did not expect this from you!"

She hung her head, and did not answer.

"I fear we have done very wrong, Sir Henry," said Eva, timidly; "can you forgive us?"

"It was not your fault," he replied; "but come, dinner will be ready in a few minutes."

He let them pass out, locked the door, and put the key in his pocket.

"Uncle, I am so very sorry!" Janie said, penitently, taking his hand.

He bent down and kissed her.

"Say no more about it, dear. But do not forget again that there are some sacred shrines, into which we cannot bear those even whom we love best to enter."

Nothing more was said, and from his manner during dinner, no one would have supposed that anything had happened to disturb him.

Afterward they went into a large paneled drawing-room; the furniture was costly but old-fashioned, and the silk and velvet fittings were faded and discolored. The sun had set, and the shadowy twilight gave the room a strange, almost ghost-like look.

"You are a musician, I believe, Miss Taylor?" Sir Henry said. "Will you sing or play something?"

"With pleasure, if you care to listen."

"I love music! Shall I ring for lights?"

"No, thank you; I like singing in the twilight best."

Eva had a remarkable talent, for, with scarcely any training, she had acquired an execution and brilliancy such as one seldom hears with an amateur; and now, forgetful of everything else, her hands wandered slowly over the keys, awakening low, sweet echoes through the lofty room; then a voice, trembling and uncertain at first, took up the strain; but it gradually gathered strength and power, causing her listener to forget everything save its rich, wild melody.

"Please do not stop; sing something more," he said, almost impatiently, as she paused.

And so she went on, almost unconsciously, until the summer twilight had well-nigh deepened into night.

She ceased, and there was unbroken silence in the room.

Janie had stolen away to spend half an hour with the old housekeeper. Sir Henry sat, his head resting on his arms, which were tabled on the table before him.

There was a low sound—something between a sigh and a groan.

Eva was startled, and, crossing the room,

stood beside him. There was just light enough for her to see that his frame was quivering, as though with some violent emotion.

"Are you ill?" she asked, anxiously.

He rose slowly, and placed his hands on her shoulders.

"I am not ill," he said, in a low, hoarse voice; "but this evening the past has come back to me with painful reality. There was a time when one—she whose portrait you saw to-day—used to sing to me in the gloaming, as you have been doing, and, for a few moments I almost believed that she was there again, in her old place, that the tragedy which made me what I am was but some fevered dream. Such fancies come to me sometimes, and, oh! the sense of desolation which follows the awakening is almost enough to drive me mad?"

Janie's step was heard in the hall.

Sir Henry resumed his place. A few minutes later, he and his niece were engaged in an animated conversation.

Eva sat silent and thoughtful, a dull, aching pain in her heart.

Had she found any clew to the mystery of the sealed package?

"Miss Taylor," said Janie, as they were driving home, "do you not like uncle Henry?"

"Yes; very much."

"And I am sure he likes you. I heard him asking you to go there very soon again. That is a great compliment from him."

"Is it?"

"Yes; he generally dislikes strangers so much, and hardly ever asks any one to The Elms. People say that he is a very strange old man. Do you think he is?"

"He may be strange, but he is very nice."

Then neither spoke again until they had reached Eastgrove.

Just as Eva was stepping out of the carriage, the hall door opened, and a gentleman came down the steps.

One glance served to show her that it was Lord Cosgrave. He raised his hat as she passed him; she bowed as stiffly as possible.

White as a sheet, she hurried through the hall and up to her own room.

Looking nervously round, she unfolded a small piece of paper, there were only a few words written on it, but there was the wild, frightened look of a hunted animal about her as she read them.

"May I come in to say good-night?" said Janie, softly opening the door.

She started back as she saw the governess. Then, coming up to her, she put her arms around her.

"Why do you look so miserable, Miss Taylor?" she asked. "Do you not like being here?"

"Like it! Ask the victim if he likes being on the rack!" Eva exclaimed. Then, startled by her own words, she added, "I have not very much to make me happy, Janie. It is very hard to be quite alone in the world, without a single friend."

"It is very hard," Janie said, softly; "but I like you very much, Miss Taylor, and I know I could be very fond of you if you would let me. I don't think either mamma or Mabel care for me much, and I want very badly to have some one to love me."

The next moment Eva was sobbing bitterly, her head resting on the shoulder of the girl whom she had fancied a stupid, uninteresting child, with whom her only connection was a dull, monotonous routine of lessons.

Ah, little do we dream what treasures often lie at our feet, and how we overlook them!

"I cannot tell you much about myself or my troubles, Janie," said Eva, at last raising her head; "but I shall be far less unhappy now that I know that there is some one who really cares for me."

"Miss Taylor, do you mean it?"

"Yes, dear, I do!"

"But I am only a child. If I were grown up I might be able to do something for you."

"Love me, Janie; you could not do more for me than that."

"Indeed I will, Miss Taylor," Janie answered, earnestly.

And, from that moment, a friendship, deep, firm, and lasting, sprung up between teacher and pupil.

Sorely indeed did Eva need some one to love and comfort her, for after that day her life was a constant martyrdom.

The note which Lord Cosgrave had slipped into her hand required her to meet him at an early hour in the park next morning, and she dared not disobey.

"Good-morning! I was beginning to fear you would disappoint me; it is past the time I mentioned," was the greeting with which he met her.

"Why did you ask me to come here, my lord?" she inquired.

"Why, simply for the pleasure of seeing you and talking to you. I never have the chance of speaking half a dozen words to you during the day; so that our only plan is to meet here in the morning."

"I do not see the necessity of our meeting at all," Eva answered, flushing angrily.

"Oh, but I do," he replied, fixing on her a look of undisguised admiration. "I thought we settled, the other day, that we were to be friends."

"You certainly are giving me peculiar marks of your friendship," Eva answered, bitterly. "What do you suppose the result

would be were Mrs. Grantham to discover that we meet here by appointment?"

"But how is she to hear it? There are no other any work-people about the park at this time, and there is no one else to see us."

"Fear of Mrs. Grantham is not my only reason. I do not wish to meet you."

"Why not?"

The proud blood of the Tremaynes ran in Eva's veins.

"You think that because I am a poor, friendless governess that I have no self-respect!" she exclaimed. "Our paths lie in different directions. Can you not take yours, and leave me to follow my own in peace? Permit me to pass now, my lord. I wish to return to the house."

"She certainly has a will of her own," thought Lord Cosgrave, as he placed himself before her, so as to bar her path, "and I enjoy the prospect of forcing it to bend to mine. Miss Taylor," he said, "you are, of course, the best judge of your own conduct, and you are at liberty to act as you think best; but I warn you that it would be rather dangerous for you to quarrel with me."

"I have no wish to quarrel with you. All I ask of you is to leave me in peace."

"Am I to understand from that that you will not meet me here again?"

"Yes."

"Are you in earnest?"

"I am."

"You do not, then, wish for my friendship?"

"No."

"My enmity, then?" he said, approaching a step or two nearer to her.

Her courage well-nigh failed her. She saw that it would indeed be dangerous to rouse his anger.

"Well," he asked, as she did not speak, "am I to be your enemy? If so, you know what it means."

"It means ruin!" she said, hopelessly.

"It does. So take your choice. Promise to do as I wish. I do not ask much, only for half an hour now and then in the morning. Refuse me this, and I tell all to Mrs. Grantham this very day!"

Her pride urged her to dare him to do his worst; but fear of the consequences was stronger even than pride.

"Be it as you wish!" she answered.

And so she had to meet him there again and again, in constant dread of being discovered. She had to listen to his fulsome flattery and expressions of undisguised admiration. She hated and detested him, and yet dared not cross his will.

Before Mrs. and Miss Grantham he hardly ever spoke to her, and that served all the more to make her feel how humiliating was her position.

Passionately, wildly, she longed to find some means of escape. Many were the plans she made; but all seemed equally impracticable, and she could do nothing but live on from day to day, hoping that some happy chance might set her free from his persecutions.

It might be that he would grow tired of her, as he had doubtless tired of many another woman, and then, perhaps, he would leave her in peace; or, more probable still, might make up his mind to propose for Mabel Grantham, whose fortune would help him very considerably to clear his heavily-incumbered estate.

Lord Cosgrave saw plainly how greatly she disliked him. She took no trouble to conceal her aversion, but it only served to increase his anxiety to win her. His was no unselfish love, as he would fain have made her believe. He knew more about her father's true history than she supposed, and knew, too, that she had a claim on Sir Henry Tremayne which, could he make it good, would render the governess a prize well worth gaining.

His chain of evidence was all but complete—only a few more proofs were wanting, and, to find them, he had set his agents busily to work.

When all was ready he would ask her to marry him. She, never dreaming that he could have any interested motives, would doubtless accept him—if not for himself, at any rate for his title and position; and, once his wife, he would establish her right to be the heiress of Sir Henry Tremayne.

Such were his plans, deeply and cleverly laid, incapable of failure, he told himself; yet, to make all doubly sure, he resolved to seek out certain parties himself, and to hear their testimony with his own ears.

This would entail an absence of a couple of weeks, at the end of which time he hoped that his golden dream would be near its realization.

Great was Eva's joy when she heard that he was going away for a short time. The sense of freedom and security was almost enough to make her feel happy.

Knowing that there was now no possibility of meeting him, she was able to roam about the sunlit park in the delicious morning hours; she could sit by the open school-room window after Janie had gone to bed, and watch the moonbeams gleaming on the trees and grass, and listen to the wild, plaintive song of the nightingales, without the haunting dread of seeing his figure coming along the terrace, and meeting his basilisk gaze.

CHAPTER VI.

"Does not Miss Taylor come into the drawing-room in the evening?"

The question was addressed to Mabel Grantham; but her attention seemed to be too much absorbed by her fancy-work to permit her to reply; and her mother, fixing a cold, inquiring look on her son, answered for her.

"Certainly not. It is generally an understood thing that the governess spends her evenings in the school-room."

"And do you never ask her in here?"

"No."

"Not even when you have no company?"

"No; I think it better not."

"Why so? Though she is a governess, she certainly has quite the appearance of a lady."

Mrs. Grantham looked rather uncomfortable.

"I do not think it right to bring people out of their proper position; and Miss Taylor would, I fear, be only too ready to forget hers," she answered, with some hesitation.

She hardly cared to tell her son her true reasons—namely, that she was jealous of the admiration which her pretty and attractive governess excited, and also that she deemed it advisable to keep her as much out of his way as possible.

"How lonely the poor girl must be!" said Philip.

"She has plenty to occupy her if she prepares properly for the next day's lessons. Then you must remember that I engaged Miss Taylor to teach Janie, and not to amuse herself."

"I would not like to be your governess, mother," Philip answered; and in a few minutes left the room, saying he would smoke a weed in the grounds.

"What is it to Philip how Miss Taylor spends her time?" said Mabel, crossly. "I never remember his having taken any notice of Janie's governesses before."

"He used to call Miss Eaton a blue stocking, and laugh at Miss White for her affectation; that is all."

"I am certain that Miss Taylor is a flirt."

"My dear Mabel, what grounds have you for such a supposition? She never has the opportunity of meeting any of the gentlemen who come to the house; I take care of that. Have you seen or heard anything?"

"No," Mabel answered; "but I do not trust her."

Since the day when Mabel had encountered Eva in the park she had watched her narrowly. That was now nearly three weeks ago, yet she had failed to make any particular discovery.

The governess and Lord Cosgrave never encountered each other to her knowledge, except now and then at luncheon, but more than once she fancied that a look of recognition had passed between them. She had not mentioned her suspicions to her mother, fearing

that she might say something either to Eva or Lord Cosgrave, which, were there really anything going on between them, would put them on their guard.

And so day after day passed. The man whose title she was so willing to share came frequently to Eastgrove. His manner was as polite and attentive as ever. Still the offer, for which she had now waited and hoped for more than a year, was not made.

It had never occurred to her to look on Eva as a possible rival. The idea of his preferring the governess to her would have seemed utterly ridiculous; yet she felt instinctively that Lord Cosgrave admired Eva, and that consciousness made Mabel hate her cordially.

She longed to have some excuse for asking her mother to dismiss Eva; but until then it had seemed impossible to find any, for Janie was making far better progress with her than with any former governess.

"If Philip speaks about her to mamma like that, she will not be kept here very long," she thought; and then began to wonder how much longer Lord Cosgrave would remain away from home, and to build castles in the air as to what might happen on his return.

Meanwhile, Philip, having lighted his cigar, walked slowly down the terrace walk, which extended along one side of the house.

"Shall I be able to speak to her at all," he thought, "or do they watch her too closely? But I must contrive to have some talk with her, and find out who she is, and why she looks so sad!"

A flood of light streamed out of one of the windows a little before him. His pulse quickened, for he knew that window belonged to the school-room.

Cautiously approaching he took up his position in a place where he was screened from view, but from which he could see the interior of the room. A large lamp was burning on the table, books and writing materials lay scattered about, but the governess had left her work, unbarred the shutters, and was standing by the window, gazing out into the night.

From his place of concealment, Philip could watch the varying expression of the pure, lovely countenance, which, though only once seen, he had been unable to banish from his thoughts. He saw her harassed, restless look, and the nervous quivering of her finely-cut lips.

But gradually the stillness of the night seemed to shed a soothing influence over her, and she smiled faintly; then, throwing up the window, leant out, and the night-breeze toyed lovingly with her bright, golden hair.

Strange indeed is the power which music possesses of conjuring up images from the land of long ago, of making us live once more in the almost forgotten past.

She left the window, and sat down before the piano. Music, soft, dreamy, and indistinct, came floating out, blending with a rich, low voice, and, as Philip listened, the present vanished from his mind; he was once more a child, sitting beside the river in the balmy summer twilight, his head resting on the knee of a fair and lovely lady, who was singing for him, and him alone. He felt the soft touch of her hand on his brow as he nestled closer and closer to her.

The vision vanished; he was once more the proud, passionate man of the world. All around was darkness; the window was closed, the music had ceased, and the singer had disappeared.

But that night, for the first time in his life, Philip Grantham felt that he had met his fate.

The dewdrops were glistening on the grass and flowers, the birds were singing their morning carol among the trees, and a light, grey mist, which the sun's rays had not yet the strength to disperse, hung on the sides of the hills as Philip left the house next morning.

How surprised his London intimates, who were accustomed to find him lounging over his breakfast at noon, would have looked could they have seen him now! Still more surprised would they have been had they known that he had been induced to take this early walk by catching a glimpse of a woman's dress among the trees of the park.

"How fortunate that I should meet you here, Miss Taylor!" he said to Eva, as he overtook her on a narrow, shady path.

The pale cheeks flushed angrily; she gave him a haughty, indignant look, but took no notice whatever of his extended hand.

This was quite a new experience for him, accustomed as he was to have his advances met with soft, flattering glances, even by the most celebrated beauties of the day.

"Your memory seems less faithful than mine," he said, withdrawing his hand. "Do you forget that I had the pleasure of meeting you at a reception at my mother's house in London about a month ago?"

Eva had not by any means forgotten it, but she answered coldly, "Mrs. Grantham desired me to play an accompaniment for you, and I obeyed; does that constitute an acquaintance?"

"I believe she forgot to introduce us, but does that signify so very much? Please do not look so indignant; I really did not mean to be rude when I spoke to you just now."

"As a gentleman, I suppose I must consider you incapable of rudeness," Eva answered, beginning to move on.

Philip hesitated a moment; then, walking on beside her, said, "At the risk of incurring your further displeasure, I must ask you not

to send me away just yet. I want to know if I am right in supposing that my mother and eldest sister are not kind to you. This is my house, and not theirs; I am Janie's guardian as well as my mother; therefore think that I am authorized to take an interest in her governess."

"You do well to remind me of my dependent position, Mr. Grantham," Eva answered. "I see that I am not to expect you to meet me as a gentleman is supposed to meet a lady, but as an employer his servant."

"Miss Taylor, you misunderstand me completely. Indeed I meant to imply no such thing. A month ago I saw one whom a single glance convinced me was a perfect lady. I saw her shamefully slighted, neglected, and spoken to as an inferior. I meet her again and my thought is that it may be in my power to make her feel that some one does not look down on her because ill-fortune has rendered it necessary that she should become a governess. That is the simple truth. Will you pardon me now for having taken the liberty of speaking to you?"

"Certainly, Mr. Grantham. I was foolish to take offense where none was intended."

"Then we will say no more about it. Will you let me ask you a few questions about yourself? Not from curiosity, believe me," he added, quickly, seeing how the hot blood rushed again to her cheeks. "But I confess I should like very much to know how one so young—"

He paused, as though at a loss how to finish his sentence.

"Why a girl not nineteen yet, and with the appearance of a lady, is obliged to earn her own bread?" she said, with a bitter smile. "I can answer that question in a few words. My father was poor, but of good family; he died a couple of months ago, and I had no choice but to work or starve. There is but one course open to a girl circumstanced as I was—to turn governess, whether she has any talent for teaching or not. But no one seems to think about that."

"I will not ask whether you have the talent you speak of. I hear that Janie has been making great progress with you."

"I do my best to get her on, and I am really very fond of the child; did I not care for her, I hardly think I could stand such a life."

"You must find it terribly lonely?"

"Rather. It is hard to have to fight life's battle entirely by one's self."

"Have you no other relations?—no friends?"

"None."

He looked as though he were going to ask her something more; but changed his mind, and said, "Do you know that you gave me a wonderful treat yesterday evening?"

"How so?"

"I happened to be on the terrace while you were singing in the school-room."

"You! I had no idea."

"Of course you had not. But how stupid of me to tell you; I might have had the same pleasure this evening."

"I very seldom sing, except when I go to The Elms; there I do it to please Sir Henry."

Philip started, and gave her a long, searching look.

"Stranger!" he said to himself. "Has he felt it, too?"

"You seem to have been very well taught," he said, aloud.

"No, I fear not. As a governess, I suppose I ought to be ashamed to confess it; but I hardly know how I learned—it seemed almost to come of itself."

"Were you never at school?"

"Oh, no; at least, never more than for a few months at a time, when I was quite a child; but my father took a great deal of trouble with me, and used to make me read and study with him when he had any spare time."

"Where did you live?"

"In different places. But it is getting late, I must not remain out any longer."

"It is not half-past eight yet."

"No matter. Janie and I breakfast at nine, and then begin lessons at once. I have a good deal to do this morning, as I did not correct her exercise last evening"

He went back part of the way with her, stopping when they were almost in view of the house.

"Perhaps I had better not go any further," he said. "But will you take an early walk to-morrow?"

She shook her head.

"Please do. I shall be on the watch for you."

She walked quickly toward the house; he watched her until she was out of sight, and then retraced his steps toward the other end of the park.

He met her again at luncheon; but his mother's looks when he attempted to engage her in conversation warned him that it would be not only wiser, but kinder, to refrain from taking much notice of her in company.

"I shall see her again to-morrow morning," he thought. But he was mistaken; it was in vain that he watched and waited, for she did not come.

CHAPTER VII.

"It certainly is rather hard to live in the same house with a person with whom one cannot exchange half a dozen words from morning till night," was Philip Grantham's angry soliloquy.

Fate had been rather unpropitious to him;

he had been at Eastgrove for four days, and, with the exception of his conversation with Eva on the morning after his arrival, had had no opportunity of speaking to her alone.

He saw plainly that she avoided him, and was angry with her for it, and still more angry with himself for minding it. What was this girl to him? he would ask himself again and again. Young, rich, and handsome, he had but to make his choice among the noblest and fairest of the land. So argued reason; but his heart told him that no woman could ever be half so dear to him as this charming governess.

For some time past, Janie had been far from well. A severe cold, which the delicate child found it impossible to shake off, made her mother feel so uneasy that the family doctor was summoned.

"A holiday, and change of air for a few weeks, would do her more good than any of my physic," was his opinion; and, at Sir Henry's urgent request, it was arranged that she and the governess should pay him a short visit.

"Is it not delightful here? Would you not like to live here always?" said Janie to Eva, as they strolled along by the river-side.

Eva did not answer, but she felt that here she could be almost happy. Treated as a welcome visitor by a kind and courteous host, free to pass her time as she pleased, feeling that her pupil's love for her was daily strengthening, she tried to forget her troubles, and to live only in the present.

Now and then she thought that the delicious, dreamy existence must soon draw to an end; but she would try resolutely to banish that fear, and shut out the memory of the man who held her fate in his hands, and who of late had used his power so as to make her bend completely to his will. Here she knew that, even when he should return home, she would be free from his persecutions; the master of The Elms regarded him with unfeigned dislike, and as long as she was at that place her persecutor could not intrude his unwelcome presence on her.

"Here are uncle Henry and Philip!" exclaimed Janie, in accents of intense pleasure, as she perceived two figures coming toward them. She ran forward to meet them, while Eva followed more slowly.

Philip's greeting was polite, but distant, and Eva felt rather embarrassed as Janie, having passed her arm through her uncle's, walked on with him.

"Why have you avoided me so persistently?" Philip asked Eva, abruptly after some minutes' silence.

"Why should you suppose that I avoided you, Mr. Grantham?"

"That is evading the question. Have I said or done anything to make you dislike or mistrust me?"

"No."

"Then what is your reason?"

"Since you press me so hard, I suppose I must give it. You know perfectly well that before your mother and sister you cannot treat me as your equal; and neither my sense of duty nor self-respect would permit me to meet you on a different footing when they are not present."

"There certainly is truth in what you say," he said; "but while you are my uncle's visitor, I hope that we may be able to see something of each other."

And before her stay at The Elms came to an end, Philip and Eva had seen a great deal of each other. Hardly a day passed the greater part of which he did not spend there; he used to join her and Janie in their morning walk; he generally made one of the party in the little boat as it shot along under the overhanging trees, or between grassy banks fringed with forget-me-nots and water-lilies; and often in the evening, as she sung to Sir Henry in the twilight, he would steal into the room, and sit listening with that vague, undefined feeling that her voice was the echo of one which he had heard in childhood.

"How Sir Henry will miss you when you return to Eastgrove!" Philip said to her, one day, as they were walking together. "He seems almost as fond of you as he is of Janie."

"He has been very kind to me indeed," Eva answered, quietly; and Philip little guessed what pain his words had caused. She knew that he had spoken the truth; knew how fond Sir Henry had grown of her—the daughter of the man who had wrecked his happiness; she could not but return that affection, and the thought of how she was deceiving him was misery to her.

"If I had only given him that package long ago!" she used to say to herself, again and again. "But it is too late now. I cannot do it—I cannot bear the thought of how he would hate me for being *his* child!"

"Just look at that house!" said Philip, pausing before the dilapidated old building. "Is it not a fit symbol of its master—a noble wreck, stately and grand even in its ruin?"

"Do you remember him before—before he had changed to what he is now?" Eva asked, speaking with trembling tones.

"Not very well. I was only a boy when it happened; but I have a perfect recollection of my aunt. I was a petted darling of hers, and she used to have me a great deal with her. I never grew tired of watching her. I used to think that she was like an angel."

The words, "Will you tell me all the story?"

—I want so much to know what it really is!" trembled on Eva's lips, but she had not the courage to utter them, and after that day she and Philip did not speak about Sir Henry's misfortune again.

Far too soon the time fixed for the termination of the visit arrived.

"I cannot bear to think that we are to go back to Eastgrove tomorrow," said Janie, sadly, on the morning of the last day they were to pass at The Elms. "But here comes Philip. Are you ready, Miss Taylor? I think he wants you and me to drive with him to the ruined abbey."

Eva was ready, and, in little more than an hour, they had reached the ruins of what had once been a fine old abbey, but now was little more than a mass of broken arches and walls, round which the ivy twined itself in untamed luxuriance.

"How funnily those children are dressed!" said Janie, pointing to two little girls, who were sitting on a pile of rubbish, eagerly devouring some food.

Their dresses were bright red, but stained and tattered, and they wore a quantity of colored beads twisted round their necks, and among the matted locks of their dusky hair.

"They must be Gipsies," said Philip. "I remember hearing that there was an encampment in the neighborhood. They have evidently come for the scraps left here by some picnic party."

Just then a tall, dark woman appeared from behind a corner, and came toward them.

"Have your fortunes told, my pretty ladies and handsome gentleman?" she said.

"Oh, yes, please!" cried Janie. "I have so longed to have my fortune told by a Gipsy. Here is my hand; now begin!"

"The hand must be crossed first, missie."

"Oh, dear! I have no money."

"Here is some," said Philip, taking out his purse; "though it is, indeed, a shame to encourage you in such nonsense."

"What I see here is no nonsense," retorted the Gipsy. "There is a bright future before you, my little lady. You have a good, kind heart, and will be rewarded yet for kindness shown to some who needed it. I can see you in years to come with a group of fair-haired children round your knee, teaching them to do as you have done."

"Is that all you have to tell her?" asked Philip, as she dropped the child's hand.

"Is it not enough?"

"Well, I suppose it is. Here, look at my hand. What can you see there?"

"Many things. You have a noble heart, which the world has done its best to spoil. You are fighting a hard battle between pride and love. Which will win I cannot say. But

mark my words; pride can never bring true happiness—love can. And then—"

"No more!" he said, snatching his hand away. "Miss Taylor, have you any ambition to hear your fortune?"

"No, thank you," said Eva, shrinking back.

"Oh, yes, you must!" exclaimed Janie. "I am sure she will tell you something very nice."

After a little more hesitation her hand was laid in the Gipsy's, crossed by a piece of gold from Philip's purse.

"Strange, confused lines!" the woman muttered; "troubles past and troubles to come; secrets dark and dread, which, sooner or later, must come to the light of day. You are loved, my lady, passionately, fiercely; and there is one man of whom you must beware. One so young and fair has no right to have secrets, and yours may be your ruin. Heavy clouds are gathering round you, but behind them there is a glimmer of light. The sun might yet pierce through them; yes, I am sure it will. But take warning from the Gipsy—whatever it may cost you, speak the truth."

She left them, and calling the children, moved slowly toward the forest on the borders of which the ruins lay. No remark was made about Eva's fortune, for both Philip and Janie saw how she trembled, and how ghastly pale she had grown.

"Shall we return now, or do you wish to remain here any longer?" Philip asked her.

"Let us go back at once, if you please."

The horse, impatient at being kept waiting so long, was pawing the ground, and it was with considerable difficulty that Janie and Eva were able to get into the tax-cart. Then it started off at a brisk pace, and it seemed to Eva that it gave Philip no little trouble to keep the animal in hand.

On they went at an ever-increasing speed, trees and hedges whirling past, Philip's face growing whiter and whiter, the veins on his temples changing into thick, knotted ropes.

"Is the entrance gate open?" Such was the thought which occurred to each of them as they neared The Elms, but none spoke. Round a sharp corner they dashed. Their last hope was gone; the gate was shut!

A sudden shock, a crash, a heavy fall, and Eva remembered no more.

"Speak to me, darling—speak to me! Tell me that I have not killed you!"

Such were the words which sounded in her ears, dreamy and in indistinct as a far-off sound.

Slowly her eyes opened. Philip was bending over her in agonized suspense.

"Thank Heaven, you are safe!" he whispered, as she smiled faintly.

"Janie—what of her?" was her first question.

"Do not trouble about Janie; she was not hurt in the least, so I sent her to the house for help. But do you feel any pain? Do you think you could stand?"

"I think so; I believe I am not hurt."

Gently he assisted her to rise.

"Not much harm done," she said. "I feel better now, only my head aches a good deal. But look at your horse!"

For the splendid animal was lying dead beside them, the shivered fragments of the tax-cart scattered around.

"And do you imagine that I think of the horse for one moment now that I know you are safe?" he exclaimed. "When I saw you lying there I felt as if I should go mad. But take my arm, and let me help you to the house. My uncle will be in a sad fright about you."

The accident had happened at the back entrance gate, and they had not far to walk to the house. When about half-way they met Janie, Sir Henry, and some of the servants.

"She is coming! she is coming!" cried Janie. "And I thought she was killed!"

"She had a wonderful escape," Philip said, gravely. "Had her head struck on the stones at the side of the lane, the blow, in all probability, would have been fatal."

CHAPTER VIII.

"SPEAK to me, darling! Tell me that I have not killed you!"

Was it a dream, or had she really heard those words from Philip Grantham's lips? Eva asked herself, as, late in the afternoon, she sat by the drawing-room window.

She was all alone, Janie and her uncle having gone to take their last row on the river. They had been very unwilling to leave her, but she had begged them to go, feeling that she would far rather be by herself.

Had he really spoken those words? No, it could not be; and yet the fancy, if fancy it were, had seemed so real. And for a few brief moments a picture of wondrous beauty rose before her mind—a picture of love and trust, and a strong arm to lean on—of one who henceforth would stand between her and all the ills of life. But scarcely was the castle in the air built when it fell in ruins at her feet. For her there never could be such happiness; she must pass through life alone, shut out from the lot of other women by those two dark, miserable secrets.

Why had she ever come to The Elms? Why had she been shown a glimpse of the paradise into which she never might enter?

She had known all along that sooner or later it must come to an end; she had known that the child who still plays with the fire which is

already darting its lurid tongues among its clothes could be called wise when compared to her; she had shut her eyes to her danger; telling herself that she only thought of him as a friend, that it was nothing more than friendship which had made their intercourse so sweet. But the delusion could be kept up no longer. The vain sophistry with which she had striven to drown the voice of conscience could no longer avail her anything. It was hard, terribly hard, but it was her lot, and she must face it bravely.

She must not meet Philip again as she had been accustomed to meet him of late; must never listen to the voice which had become like music to her; must never watch for the kind smile as he spoke to her. All must be at an end now—all must be changed. She would meet him now and then, but never once as her equal; she would see his smile, and hear his voice, but neither voice nor smile would be for her. The battle with her heart would be a very hard one, but she resolved to fight it bravely.

And yet in that moment of anguish there was no feeling of bitterness or reproach against him for whose sins she was suffering.

And, even as these thoughts passed through her mind, Philip was coming nearer and nearer. He saw the well-known figure by the open window. A minute or two later he was standing beside her.

He took her trembling hands in his, and gazed at her for some time without speaking. She knew that she would need all her courage now.

In low, broken words he told her all—how he had loved her from the first moment he had seen her; how he had tried to conquer that love, which had become part of his very being. He did not hide from her that pride of race had bade him forget her, and seek a bride among those who were his equals in the eyes of the world. Each time he had come to see her he had determined should be the last, but an irresistible power had brought him to her again and again. That very morning he had told himself that all intercourse with her should now come to an end; but in that moment, when he almost feared that he had lost her forever, pride, ambition, and all thought of what the world might say, had vanished, and love had gained the day.

"Do not fear that I shall ever regret what I am now saying," he concluded. "I am not hurried away by blind passion. I have earnestly reflected. I have weighed everything, and know that nothing which the world has to offer can for one moment be compared with your love; that, parted from you, my life would be utterly worthless; that had I a hundredfold as much as I possess to offer, I would

only value it because I could lay it at your feet."

She heard him to the end; and then, without raising her head, said, scarcely above a whisper, but every word distinct: "Mr. Grantham, I thank you most sincerely for the honor you have done me. No words of mine could make you understand how grieved I am that you should have cared for me. Try to forget that you ever saw me."

"Eva, you cannot surely mean it? Am I to understand that I am nothing to you?—that you find it impossible to love me?" he exclaimed, in tones of amazement and vexation.

"I mean what I say. Please go, now. This is equally painful to both," she answered, quickly.

"I will not go until I know your true reason. What is there to hinder you from becoming my wife?"

"I can never be your wife, Mr. Grantham!"

"Why not? I will know!"

"I cannot tell you my reasons."

"Is it because you do not love me?" he demanded.

She was silent. The beautiful head bent lower and lower, and he could not see her face; but he saw how convulsively her fingers twined themselves together.

"Is it because you do not love me?" he asked again; but no answer came.

How she longed for the power to say the words, "I do not love you—I never can care for you but as a friend." But those words she could not say—she dared not.

"I have not deceived myself, then!" he exclaimed, falling on his knees beside her, and clasping his arms round her waist.

She struggled to release herself but he would not let her go.

"I have not deceived myself," he went on. "I know—I feel that you love me. What is there, then, to prevent our happiness? Am I not my own master? Am I not free to marry whom I choose? Are you thinking of my mother? She has no voice whatever in the matter. What do we two care for her displeasure? Do not fear that all my family will look coldly on you. My uncle knows all; I told him to-day, and he said it made him feel so happy; and Janie, I know, loves you like an elder sister. And we shall have each other, Eva. You must promise to be mine. I will take no denial."

"I cannot promise; I can never be yours."

He sprung to his feet, strode up and down through the room two or three times; then, stopping before her, said, "Tell me the reason of this, Eva. I demand to know. It is my right."

She looked up at him for the first time—at the man she loved so dearly, yet whom her duty forced her to refuse.

"I do not recognize that right, Mr. Grantham."

"You tell me that, Eva! You deny my right to question you! Does not the love of which I have just told you give me the right than which there is no better? Do you mean to say that you will send me away with no reason whatever for your refusal? You cannot do it—in common justice and honor you cannot!"

"I have no choice but to tell you, then," she said. "There is a shadow over my life, which, had you known, would have prevented you from speaking to me as you have just done."

"I do not understand you. A shadow over your life?"

"Yes, Mr. Grantham; the shadow of crime."

"I can hardly believe you; no, it is impossible that one so fair and pure should have done aught to render herself unworthy of any man's best love!"

"And I have done nothing. The sin is not mine, but I must bear the punishment."

"You are speaking in riddles, Eva. Can you not tell me plainly what you mean?"

"I cannot."

"Why not? How can the sin of any one else separate us?"

"Listen to me, Mr. Grantham. There are passages in my life of which I could never tell you. I have secrets that you could never know; and yet, I tell you again, that the fault is none of mine—I am perfectly innocent."

"Eva, do you remember what the Gipsy woman said to you this morning? You start: I see you have not forgotten her words. She was right, then, when she spoke of secrets dark and dread; but do not forget what she said about their coming to the light of day, and her warning—'Whatever it may cost you, speak the truth!' Throw off all disguise now. Tell me your secret, whatever it may be."

"I cannot. You would shrink from and avoid me if I did."

"I swear to you I would not. Have you not told me just now that you are perfectly innocent? From the bottom of my heart I believe you. Let me hear all; I give you my word of honor it shall not make the least difference between us."

"I repeat again, I cannot tell you."

He was silent for some minutes, then said, slowly, "Eva, I am going to prove to you how strong is my love. Keep your secret; I shall never seek to know it. And now will you be my wife under that condition?"

"No, Mr. Grantham, that cannot be. Ask yourself seriously if you would be right in marrying me after what I have just told you? Could you bear the thought that there was a page in the history of your wife's life which she could never dare to let you read?"

He did not answer, and she continued, "You must acknowledge that I am right—that there is an impassable gulf between us."

"No; it can be bridged over!" he exclaimed. "I know it can. Eva, once more I plead. Do not send me away like this. You love me—I know you do—and why should you not trust me? Tell me all now. Are you afraid of your secrets being discovered? If so, is not the world large? Could I not take you somewhere where no memory of the past could follow? Think of your life, then—think of what we could be to each other; we could make each other's happiness, and no cloud ever come between us."

And Eva did picture to herself her life as Philip's wife, a dream-like, blissful existence; happiness, perfect and complete, because created by his love. But she answered, calmly and firmly, as before, "No, it can never be!"

Philip started; a new idea seemed to strike him.

"There is one thing at least that I insist on knowing!" he exclaimed. "Have I a rival? Answer me!"

She trembled, and changed her voice, but still she answered, "No."

"Are you certain?"

"Yes."

"Then it is not too late yet. Have pity on yourself, if you have none on me. I know how miserable your life at Eastgrove must be, and instead of returning there to-morrow as a governess, you could remain here till I bring you back as my wife and its mistress."

"Nothing that you say would make me change my mind, Mr. Grantham. I have given you my last answer; do not force me to repeat it."

Philip made no reply, but strode out of the room.

Half an hour later, Sir Henry found her in the place where Philip had left her, shivering with cold, and very pale. There were no signs of tears; anguish such as hers rarely suffers its victims to weep until time has laid his healing hand on the wounds.

"What is it, my child?" he said, gently taking her hand in his.

"I have just seen Philip," he said. "I did not speak to him; but his look told me that the hope I had entertained is not to be realized. You know best, I suppose. I will ask no questions; but I want to tell you that whatever may happen, you must always look on me as your friend."

She pressed his hand in silence, while she repeated to herself, "If he only knew!—if he only knew!"

CHAPTER IX.

EVA'S reception by Mrs. and Miss Grantham was stiff and chilling in the extreme. Rumors had reached them that Philip had been paying her a good deal of attention during her stay at The Elms.

"Driving with her, indeed!" exclaimed the younger lady, when the news of the accident arrived. "You see, mamma, that I was right; Miss Taylor is a flirt. I should not be in the least surprised if she were laying a trap for Philip."

"Nor should I," her mother answered. "But Philip knows very well how to take care of himself. However, I see that it will be as well to watch her sharply in future."

"My opinion is that it would be better to let her go, and to look for a more suitable person in her place," said Mabel, who was not at all anxious to have the governess thrown in Lord Cosgrave's way.

"But a suitable person is not so easily found," was the reply; "and she certainly does her work well. Janie has got on better with her than with any governess she ever had. Do you remember how tired we used to be of Miss White's never-ending complaints?"

"As you please, mamma. I only hope you may not have reason to regret not having taken my advice," answered Mabel.

Philip Grantham felt utterly miserable. Never had he imagined that it could possibly be in any one's power to make him so wretched, and he had never dreamed of the possibility of being refused by the woman whom he should see fit to honor by the offer of his hand.

Refused by a governess! Two months ago, he would have laughed at the idea. And yet she had refused him, and in a manner which left him entirely destitute of hope.

"What can be that secret? Why would she not trust me with it?" he asked himself, for the hundredth time, as he leant against the trunk of an oak tree, his looks fixed on the school-room window.

The night was dark and chilly, a thick, wetting rain was falling; yet for nearly an hour he did not move from his post, and at last his patience was rewarded.

A light appeared inside, and he could see her moving backward and forward, rearranging books and music in their places. Then she sat down by the table, and soon was, apparently, absorbed in study.

But before long her attention seemed to flag. She pushed the book aside, and leaned back in her chair.

Philip could see how pale and rigid were her features, and knew that she was thinking and suffering. But though he almost despised himself for it, the sight of that miserable face

filled him with a feeling almost akin to joy. Was it not a fresh proof that she really loved him? True, no one could have given a more decided refusal than hers had been, but it was not too late yet; might she not change her mind, and give him the answer he longed for?

Something appeared between him and the window. It was a man's figure, and Philip's heart beat with fearful violence as he waited in dread expectation for what was to follow.

The girl inside seemed to interest him also, for he stood still, and looked on. Then he tapped lightly on the pane.

She started, rose, and crossed the room. Then she threw up the window, and Philip could hear the sound of low, cautious voices.

She turned away, but a few minutes afterward reappeared at a small side-door, which she closed softly after her.

The man went forward to meet her, and they walked along together. They were coming in the direction of the place where Philip stood, and he heard Lord Cosgrave's voice say, "Excuse yourself as you will, I say you have not been true to our engagement! What right had you to leave Eastgrove without telling me how I could communicate with you? I can assure you that on my return home, very little would have made me go to The Elms, and ask to see you."

Her reply was not audible to Philip; but he could hear how Lord Cosgrave answered.

"You had better take care, or I will do it! And now let me ask you, why did you allow Philip Grantham to be so much with you? I forbid you to have anything whatever to do with that man."

"That prohibition is unnecessary, my lord," Eva said, firmly.

"So much the better for—"

They had passed him by this, and the rest of the sentence was lost.

Philip stood as one stunned.

Was it thus that Eva was deceiving him? He had believed her so noble, so truthful! He had never doubted her word when she had told him that it was no fault of hers which parted them.

The story of the secret which overshadowed her life must be an invention since there seemed to be no such barrier between her and Lord Cosgrave.

"Our engagement," he had heard him say, and yet had she not declared to him that he had no rival? Was it, then, possible that she was engaged to that man, who was almost looked on as the future husband of his sister, and that he himself had been merely the toy with which she had been amusing herself, or, worse still, the tool of which she had made use, in order to draw on her noble lover?

Everything seemed to witness against her,

and Philip felt at that moment almost a desire to kill her.

They were coming toward him again, and he drew in his breath and listened.

"I will not keep you out in the rain any longer," Lord Cosgrave was saying. "But, remember, to-morrow morning, at half-past seven—the usual hour."

"Very well."

"I shall wait for you at the end of the walk by the lime trees. Mind you are not late, as you were last time."

"I shall be punctual."

He went with her as far as the door through which she had come out, and left her there.

"I shall watch them, and learn what all this really means," Philip said to himself, "and she shall know that my love is not to be trifled with."

When Eva arrived at the rendezvous next morning, she found Lord Cosgrave awaiting her.

He came forward eagerly to meet her, with outstretched hands; but she drew herself up proudly.

"Say what you have to say, and quickly," she exclaimed; "and do not keep me here any longer than necessary."

"Eva, I did not expect this from you. Can you not find something kind to say?"

"My name is Miss Taylor, my lord!"

"I am not quite so sure of that."

"How? What do you mean?"

"Simply this—that I know rather more about you than you suppose."

"What do you know?"

"When and where Mark Tremayne died, and what kind of a life he led for the last eighteen or twenty years."

"What have I to do with Mark Tremayne?"

"There is no need for me to tell you; you know perfectly well."

She saw that he had discovered another of her secrets, and that it would be useless to attempt any disguise with him.

"Was it to tell me of that that you asked me to meet you here this morning?" she asked.

"No, indeed. I was prompted by a far different motive."

"And that was?"

"Can you not guess? Did you never ask yourself why I was always planning and plotting for a few moments' conversation with you? You would have repelled me; would have refused to have any thing to do with me, had I not made you feel that I had some power over you. It may have been base and mean to make use of that power, but what was I to do? You must blame not me, but the love with which you have inspired me."

"Stop, if you please, my lord! I cannot listen to such words."

"You must and shall listen! Eva Tremayne, I tell you that I love you passionately; so much so that, forgetting the difference in our positions, the dearest wish of my heart is to make you my wife. I see I have startled you. You did not expect this. You did not know what barriers love such as mine was capable of breaking through."

Eva stood before him confused and bewildered. Never had she deemed it possible that Lord Cosgrave would make her such an offer. To her he had always seemed a hard, selfish, pleasure-loving man, capable of strong passions, perhaps, but one who would never suffer himself to be so blinded by them as to lose sight of his own interest.

She knew, too, that his property was heavily involved, and that his only chance of saving it was a wealthy marriage.

The love which he professed for her might be real, but could it possibly make him not only forget the cloud which hung over her father's name, but also her own want of fortune, without which marriage for him would be certain ruin?

He knew who her father really was—did that throw any light on the subject?

Then she remembered her father's words when giving her his confession for Sir Henry Tremayne.

"You will be rich, happy and prosperous," he had said; could it be that Lord Cosgrave knew what her claim on Sir Henry was, and that he hoped to secure a larger dower with her than with Mabel Grantham?

Thoughts such as these flashed through her brain, and she felt that, even if she had not seen Philip Grantham, she could never love this man.

"I am waiting for your answer, Eva," he said, as she did not speak. "Do not keep me longer in suspense!"

"Lord Cosgrave, if you have hoped to make me love you by threatening and frightening me, you were greatly mistaken. You have made me look on you as an enemy, and how can you expect that I should think differently of you now?"

"There is no difficulty about that, now that you know my real motives."

"I do not agree with you. Dislike is not so easily overcome."

"Do you imply, then, that you dislike me?" he angrily demanded.

"I do."

"But you will try to conquer it—you will learn to love me yet!"

"No; never!"

She looked at him, intending to be bold; but his rageful expression made her tremble.

"You shall do as I wish!" he exclaimed. "Before you leave this spot you shall promise to be my wife!"

"I will not!"

"Do you know that a few words from me would ruin you?"

"I do."

"And you still refuse?"

"Yes."

"Eva, you are mad. You, a penniless governess, with a name which, were the truth known, is blackened with crime; and yet, when a nobleman asks you to be his wife, you refuse him! Take some time to think of this, then you will give me a different answer."

"I have already given you my final answer, my lord. I never could care for you, and have not fallen so low as to marry merely for a home and position."

"Do you know what the consequences will be if you change my love into hatred?"

"I can guess."

"Can you? Do you know that by to-morrow you will not have a roof over your head—that Mrs. Grantham shall know all, and that you will be driven out into the world, without a friend? You think, perhaps, that Sir Henry will stand by you? You have, I hear, been flatterer and fawning on him, until you have quite gained his heart. But what will that avail you when he knows that you are the daughter of the man who slew his wife and child?"

Eva staggered back, and almost fell against the trunk of one of the trees. Clinging to it for support, she turned toward Lord Cosgrave, who was watching her.

"It is false—it is false!" she faltered.

"It is true, and I can prove it. It was because he discovered that I knew his secret that he tried to silence me on that night when I first made your acquaintance!"

His words brought conviction with them. She could deny her father's guilt no longer, and now knew what was contained in the sealed package.

Should she make a further sacrifice of herself to his memory? Should she promise to wed the man whom she so utterly loathed?

The thought was madness: yet what was she to do? She would make one more effort. If he loved her he might possibly be moved to pity.

"Lord Cosgrave," she said, slowly, "I appeal to your honor as an Englishman—as a nobleman. It is not my fault that I cannot give you my heart. Love is not to be bought and sold. Do not think that I am going to plead for myself; but, if you have one spark of manliness or generosity, you will not refuse to listen to a daughter's prayer to spare the memory of her father. Revenge is sweet, they say; but can it give you any pleasure to crush a defenseless girl, whose only offense is that she cannot love you?"

His better nature struggled for the mastery; but only for one moment did he hesitate.

"Do you love any one else?" he asked, coming a step or two nearer.

She did not answer.

"I believe you do. Philip Grantham is my rival; deny it if you dare!"

Still no answer.

"I see it all now; and you think by fine speeches, and appeals to my generosity, to make me promise to keep your secrets, so that you may be free to marry him. Cleverly planned, Miss Eva; but allow me to tell you that you have failed!"

"You mistake me, my lord. I have already told him that we can never be anything to each other. My motives are not quite so base as you seem to believe."

"Pardon me, Eva, for the suspicion. I really think that you are a noble, high-minded girl, and that you would give the same answer to whoever asked your love. Think, then, what your future life would be. Year after year spent in hopeless drudgery; no rest for you. And, instead of that, you can be the wife of a nobleman; may hold your own with the haughtiest ladies in the land; not a single wish ungratified; not one rough spot left in your path. Do not stand in the way of your happiness! Tell me that you will be my wife!"

She was driven almost to despair. There seemed no hope for her but to submit to her fate.

A little more or less miserable, what did it matter—what did it signify what became of her? So she reasoned to herself. Then she said, "I did not ask for happiness, my lord; only for peace. Will you wait for my final answer until to-morrow?"

CHAPTER X.

THERE had been an unseen spectator of the interview between Eva and Lord Cosgrave.

Concealed from view by the thick shrubs, Philip Grantham had watched the woman he loved coming through the park to keep her appointment with the Earl.

Unable to catch their words, he had seen how passionately and eagerly he was speaking; but he told himself that there was no trace either of love or happiness on her pale features.

Why, then, was she there? That question he could not answer, except by the supposition that she was a false, heartless deceiver.

He knew perfectly well that he was playing a base, dishonorable part, but he could not tear himself away from the spot—could not turn away his eyes from the countenance of the girl whom at that moment he hardly knew whether he loved or hated.

In agonized suspense he watched them—now cursing her for her baseness, now racking

his brains to find excuses for her conduct, hoping that all might yet be satisfactorily explained.

He knew that she loved him. She had not been able to hide that from him, yet she had told him that she could never be his. What, then, could be her connection with this man? Why should she meet Cosgrave thus secretly? Why had he spoken to her last evening as though he had a right to demand it?

"Oh, Heaven!" he moaned; and covered his face with his hands.

When he looked again, Eva was clasped in Lord Cosgrave's arms. The embrace lasted but for a moment; then she hurried away as noiselessly and quickly as she had come.

"Gained at last!" muttered the nobleman to himself. "I have won the only woman in the world whom I ever wished for as my wife, and shall be the husband of the greatest heiress in the shire."

At that moment there was a hand on his throat, and a voice hissed the word "Villain!" into his ear.

For some minutes Philip Grantham and Lord Cosgrave closed in a fierce, desperate struggle; then, as though by mutual consent, they relaxed their hold, and stood scowling at each other.

"Villain!" repeated Philip; "what have you to do with her?"

"Whom do you mean, Mr. Grantham?"

"Whom should I mean but Miss Taylor?"

"Oh, Miss Taylor!"

"Yes; and I ask what you and she have to do with each other?"

Lord Cosgrave stroked his mustache, and eyed his rival superciliously.

"What have you and Miss Taylor to do with each other?" questioned Philip again, his fury now thoroughly aroused.

"And supposing that I refuse to answer?" the other replied, coolly.

"I tell you I will know!"

"Really, Mr. Grantham, your conduct is slightly peculiar. I happen to meet a lady here for a few minutes, and you throw yourself on me like a maniac, as though you had a right to call me to account for my actions."

Philip paused for a moment. He saw that he would gain nothing by a display of temper, and, struggling to control himself, said, "Lord Cosgrave, Miss Taylor happens to be under my protection as an inmate of my house. I discover that a gentleman is in the habit of meeting her clandestinely; is there, therefore, anything strange in my asking him to explain his conduct?"

"Perhaps not; particularly when you happen to take a very warm interest in the young lady," sneered Lord Cosgrave. "But that warm interest hardly excuses the meanness of

playing the spy on her, as you have evidently been doing this morning."

Philip felt that this taunt was merited, and bit his lip.

"Have you anything more to say to me?" asked Lord Cosgrave.

"Yes!" thundered Philip. "Let me tell you that I am going to give orders to the servants to horsewhip you off the grounds whenever you dare set foot inside my gates, unless you give me your promise to exchange no word with Miss Taylor in future."

"That I can hardly do, seeing that she has agreed to be my wife."

"She has not. I do not believe you!"

"Really, Mr. Grantham, you use very strong language; but, under the circumstances, I suppose I must excuse you. I repeat that, believe it or not as you like, Miss Taylor and I are engaged. You look incredulous still! Let me see; I have promised your mother to lunch at Eastgrove to-day. I suppose you will be there, too; and then it is my intention to announce the fact."

And, without waiting for a reply, he turned on his heel, and walked away.

The morning hours dragged slowly on. With fevered brain and aching heart, Eva struggled bravely to get through her work.

"I am sure you are ill, Miss Taylor," Janie said, kindly. "Shall I ask mamma if we may have no more lessons to-day?"

"No, dear," Eva answered; "my head feels rather bad, that is all. Go on with your history now."

But scarcely had the lesson recommenced when the door opened, and Philip Grantham came into the room.

Governess and pupil looked up in surprise, while the changing cheek of the former betrayed how agitated she was.

"Would you mind leaving the room for a short time, Janie?" he said. "I want to speak to Miss Taylor."

Janie obeyed, and went up-stairs, picturing to herself the time when the governess she loved so dearly would be her own darling sister.

After one quick, startled glance, Eva had not moved since Philip came into the room.

He stood at the opposite side of the table, his arms folded across his chest, watching her with knitted brows, and an angry light in his eyes.

The silence became oppressive, yet she dared not speak.

"Miss Taylor," he said at last—and oh, how hard and cold his voice sounded!—"I have come to thank you for your kindness toward me. You taught me what love and happiness really were, and lulled my senses to sleep in a

delicious dream. From hour to hour, from day to day, I lived on, caring for and thinking of you, and only you. You saw it, you knew it; and lured me on until I was passionately, hopelessly in love with you, and all the time you were laughing at me for my blind folly, and thinking of the time when you would be the wife of a man who had succeeded in winning you, because he has a title to his name. Shame on you to trifle with an honest heart! The time may come when you will suffer as I am suffering now; then you may feel some remorse for the wrong you have done me. That is all I have to say, false, treacherous creature! Soon I shall be master of myself again, and then shall hate and despise you far more than I have ever loved you!"

He turned to go, but Eva placed herself between him and the door. He tried to pass her, but she would not move.

"Do not condemn me quite unheard," she pleaded. "There is truth in what you say, but you misjudge my motive completely."

"Are you going to marry Lord Cosgrave?"

"I—I cannot tell," she faltered.

"You cannot tell, indeed!" he exclaimed. "You met him yesterday evening; met him by appointment again this morning. Perhaps you mean nothing by that either. You intend to draw him on as you did me—to throw him over and laugh at him afterward. You fancy, I dare say, that your beauty may draw a coronet to your feet any day, and that you have only to make your choice. Can I wonder now that you should have refused me, when you have the prospect of becoming an earl's wife?"

"I do not want Lord Cosgrave or his title—indeed, I do not, Mr. Grantham."

"Then why flirt with him as you have done?—why come between my sister and the man to whom she was all but engaged? Was that fair or honorable of you?"

"I have done nothing dishonorable, Mr. Grantham."

"Then your sense of honor must be a rather peculiar one, or how could you have acted so?"

"I could not help it—indeed, I could not! He—"

"He let you see how he admired you, and your vanity rendered it impossible for you to resist the temptation of making a nobleman love you; there is no difficulty in understanding that."

"No, indeed, Mr. Grantham."

"I do not want to hear any of your excuses. I know not what power forced me to seek your presence now. But I could not rest until I had let you know that you were unmasked; that I saw you at last in your true colors. And now let me give you one piece of information.

Lord Cosgrave, nobleman though he be, is little more than a ruined bankrupt. How he is to live if he marries you I cannot imagine; and what is more, he is a bad, worthless man. It was in direct opposition both to my wish and that of Sir Henry that he was admitted so frequently to Eastgrove. Give your happiness to his keeping and you will bitterly repent it to your dying day."

"You are speaking to me as though I were a free agent; but I am not. I would give worlds to escape the doom of becoming that man's wife."

"Flattering to him, certainly! And only this morning you promised."

"I promised him nothing."

"So you say; but I had the contrary from his own lips."

"Did he dare?"

"Yes; he dared to tell me that you were his affianced wife. And now I shall have the honor of wishing you good-morning, Miss Taylor. Our interview has not been a particularly pleasant one; but, at any rate, I fancy that we understand each other."

"Wait one moment, and I will tell you all."

He gave her a look of withering scorn.

"I might listen if I thought I could believe you," he said. "That not being the case, permit me to pass."

As he was opening the door, he was met by one of the servants. The girl looked surprised to see him there; but went in, and landed a small box to Eva.

"With Lord Cosgrave's compliments," he heard her say.

With a bitter laugh, Philip walked down the passage leading from the school-room.

"False, heartless girl!" he muttered. "The worst I can do is to let her alone. The course which she has chosen will bring its own punishment."

With trembling hands, Eva opened the box. It contained a crimson rose, and on a piece of paper were these words:—

"You must decide at once. I shall see you at luncheon to-day. If you wear the flower I send you, I shall know that you accept me, and shall tell Mrs. Grantham of our engagement. If I do not see the token, all I know of your father and of yourself shall be told. Philip Grantham and Sir Henry will be there, and shall also hear the story."

The luncheon-bell had rung some time. Every one had taken their place. There was but one vacant chair—that generally occupied by the governess.

"Where is Miss Taylor, Janie?" asked Mrs. Grantham.

"I do not know, mamma. I thought she was coming."

"It is very rude of her to come late!" said Mabel.

Just then Eva came into the room. A

bright red spot burned on each cheek. Dazzlingly beautiful she looked in her plain black dress. But she did not wear the crimson rose.

CHAPTER XI.

WITH a nervous, scarcely audible apology to Mrs. Grantham, Eva took her place beside Janie. Sir Henry was sitting next Lord Cosgrave at the opposite side of the table, and gave her a friendly nod and a smile, which she did not seem to see.

Not once during luncheon did she raise her head. She felt that Lord Cosgrave was watching her. She had defied his power; she had dared him to do his worst, and was waiting for his vengeance.

Every moment seemed an age. Each time he spoke, or that there was a pause in the conversation, she believed he was about to begin, until, the intense strain was almost more than she could endure, and she longed for the storm to burst.

Luncheon came to an end. He had told nothing. Had his heart been moved to pity? Was he going to spare her?

"Mrs. Grantham!" at last, he said.

The dreaded moment had arrived.

The lady of the house looked up. Something in his tone surprised her, and made her wonder what was coming.

"Well, Lord Cosgrave?" she said.

"There is a story which I think it is my duty to tell you—all of you, I mean; for there are some here whom it will interest greatly."

"You quite raise my curiosity. Is your story an amusing one?"

"By no means; and, as it relates to family matters, may I ask you to come into the library? Here, in the drawing room, we might be interrupted by servants or visitors."

"Certainly."

And she glanced at Eva. She looked on the governess as scarcely more than an upper servant.

"Miss Taylor must also favor us by her presence," Lord Cosgrave said; and no further remark was made.

Wondering very much what the mysterious story could be, they crossed the hall to the library. None was more surprised than Philip. This was hardly the way in which he had expected Lord Cosgrave to announce his engagement.

As she reached the library door, Eva felt a hand laid on her arm, and a voice said in her ear, "I give you one more chance. Will you be mine?"

Her answer was, "No."

"Blame yourself, not me, then. I am sorry to tell all."

There was complete silence in the library.

Mrs. Grantham and Sir Henry had seated themselves on a sofa; Mabel on a low chair near them. Eva retreated into the furthest corner, whither Janie followed her. Philip stood leaning against the window-frame, and his eyes moved restlessly from the motionless figure of the governess to Lord Cosgrave, who had a look of mingled anger and malicious triumph.

"Sir Henry," he commenced, "would you care to know something of the history of your cousin, Mark Tremayne?"

Philip started. What could Mark Tremayne possibly have to do with Eva?

"If you know anything of my cousin, I should like to hear it," the Baronet answered; "but, as I fear that you cannot have any very pleasant communication to make respecting him, I should prefer your telling me when we are alone."

"Excuse me, Sir Henry; but all here must know what I have to tell," Lord Cosgrave said, decidedly.

"Very well; proceed."

"Do you remember how, not very long after your lawsuit with Mark Tremayne, you went with your wife and child to stop by the seaside, on a wild part of the Devonshire coast?"

"Why remind me of that?" groaned Sir Henry.

"Because it is of that time I must speak. I was then a lad of about sixteen, and had for some time been at a school in Devonshire. I hated it with all my heart—masters, place, and lessons. The summer holidays were over, and I was forced to return; no one I knew was traveling with me, and I thought what fun it would be to get out at one of the smaller stations, spend the day as I liked, and go on to school on the morrow. No one would ever be any the wiser, and I had plenty of money to pay for a night's lodging. By some strange chance, I got out at a station within a mile or two of the place where you were stopping, Sir Henry; though of course I did not know that at the time. I was walking along the cliff, enjoying my adventure immensely, when sitting under a grass-covered bank, I saw a lady and a child. As I came near, I recognised Lady Tremayne and her little girl. The child was creeping about, but the mother had fallen asleep. I was going to hurry away, thankful that I had not been seen by her, when I saw a gentleman coming toward them, so I hid behind the bank. At first I thought that it was you, and wondered why you were so poorly dressed; but soon I saw that it was your cousin Mark. He went straight up to Lady Tremayne, and stood looking at her for a moment or two. Then he took out some toy, which he showed the child; she seized it at once, and let him take her in his arms. A few strides brought him to the edge of the cliff—"

"No, no; it cannot be; he never could have done that!" cried Sir Henry.

"He could, and he did. He had vowed vengeance, and kept his word. Terrified, I hurried back to the station just in time to catch the evening train. Not even to one of my school-fellows did I ever breathe a word of what I had seen. I had read tales of cases where it had happened that the accidental witnesses of crimes were accused of having committed those crimes themselves; and it did not seem impossible to me that, were I to accuse Mark Tremayne of having dashed your child down the cliff, he would retort the accusation on myself. Then whose word would have prevailed?—his or mine? Every one in the neighborhood knew that I disliked you, on account of you having informed my father of some of my boyish delinquencies which you had discovered. I had been severely punished, and had been heard to utter the wish that I might find some way of repaying you, therefore the fear that suspicion might fall on me was not by any means groundless. So I kept my secret. I heard how, Lady Tremayne having fallen asleep, the child must have crept too near the edge of the cliff, and fallen over. I heard how the shock was fatal to the mother's reason, and how her death a few months afterward was almost looked on as a happy release, so great had been her anguish of mind; and none guessed that I knew what had really happened to the infant."

He ceased speaking, and for a long time no one broke the silence. Philip looked at Eva, and wondered again what connection Lord Cosgrave's story could possibly have with her.

"Have you finished?" asked Sir Henry; "or is there any more?"

"Three years ago, I was traveling on the Continent, and stopped for some days at Baden-Baden," Lord Cosgrave went on. "One evening I went into one of the gaming houses, and began to play. Suddenly a man stepped forward, and said that I had cheated. The charge was utterly false, I need hardly say; but I had no way of disproving it. From the very first, the man's features had seemed familiar, and just as he was repeating his accusation for the second or third time, and had arrested the attention of every one in the room, I remembered where I had seen him before. It was Mark Tremayne. I knew how to silence him, then. The words, 'Mark Tremayne, I know what you did with Sir Henry's child when you stole it from its sleeping mother,' whispered to him, were quite enough. He humbly withdrew his charge, begged my pardon for his mistake, and left the house. An hour or two later, as I was returning to my hotel, a girl stopped me in the street. She asked me if I was an Englishman; and, when I said that I was, she begged me to

come with her to her father, who was in great trouble. The girl's look and manner pleased me and I went with her. She led me to a small house in the suburbs. I followed her into the sitting room, and whom should I find waiting for me there but Mark Tremayne. I thought he was going to beg for mercy; but instead of that, he began to threaten. That was more than I could bear, and I called him an assassin to his teeth. He flew on me like a wild beast. I saw the flash of something like a huge knife, and gave myself up for lost, when the girl, who had left us alone, dashed into the room, and held back his arm, and before he had time to shake her off I made my escape. At first I intended to set the police after him, but changed my mind, thinking it was no affair of mine. I never saw him again; but that was not my last meeting with the girl. I found her singing for money in the streets of Paris some months ago; but before I had had time to speak more than a few words, she disappeared, and I was unable to trace her."

"And you have not seen her since?" inquired Mrs. Grantham, as he paused.

"Yes; I have seen her again, in your house, as your governess!"

There was a pause—the silence before a storm. Then, her head thrown back, her features working with passion, Mrs. Grantham crossed the room to where Eva sat.

"Vile, miserable adventuress!" she exclaimed; "how dared you so deceive me? You, a street singer—the child of an assassin—to enter my house under a false name! But here you shall not remain. Go, pack your trunk; in an hour you leave Eastgrove. My house shall be polluted no longer by your presence!"

"No, mamma, no!" sobbed Janie. "Do not send her away; I love her so!"

"Love her!—that creature? Shame on you!" cried her mother, pushing away the child. "Leave the room, Miss Taylor—that is the name you intend to call yourself by still, I presume?—and remember, in an hour the carriage will be ready to take you to the station. I will pay you your salary up to the end of the quarter, and after that I hope never to see you or hear of you again!"

"Let me say a word," interrupted Sir Henry. "You are too hard on her, Mary; she is not answerable for her father's crimes."

"She knew of them; she came here under false pretenses," Mrs. Grantham answered.

"I only knew of one!" said Eva, despair giving her courage to defend herself. "I knew that my father did attempt the life of Lord Cosgrave; but that was all. Until my father was dying, I had not an idea that we did not bear our real name. Then he told me, and also that he had wronged Sir Henry; but it was from Lord Cosgrave's lips that I heard for the first time what he had really done. When

you engaged me as your governess, I knew not that Sir Henry was any relation of yours. It was very wrong of me, I suppose, to accept so much kindness from him; but if he only knew what anguish of remorse I felt for my father's sin, he would forgive me!"

"I do forgive you, my child," said Sir Henry. "You have been wrong, I confess. You should have told me the truth, but I pity more than I blame you. Can I ever pardon your father? I fear not. But his child shall not be punished for his sin. My sister says that you must leave this house at once. Will you accept of my protection until you shall have arranged your future plans?"

With tears of affection and gratitude, and with a trembling voice, "How noble and generous you are, Sir Henry!" said Eva. "But I cannot accept your kind offer. No; do not urge me; it is impossible. Farewell, and know that I shall never forget all your goodness!"

"Wait one moment," said Philip, speaking for the first time. "I have a few words to add to Lord Cosgrave's story. Much that before was a mystery is now explained: Eva Tremayne—let me give her her real name—interested me from the first moment I saw her. When I came here from London, I was determined to be her friend. While she was staying at The Elms I learned to know and love her. I asked her to be my wife, and she refused, telling me that there was a secret in her life which was an impassable barrier between us. The evening of her return here, I saw her meet Lord Cosgrave; heard her make an appointment with him for next morning. I was mad with rage and jealousy; I thought that she had deceived me; and when I questioned his lordship there, he told me that she had promised to marry him. That promise, I know now, she never gave; but he thought to force her to submit by threatening to betray her secret. Tell me, Eva—Am I right?"

"Yes."

"And can you forgive the words that I spoke to you this morning? But I thought that you had been playing with me, and felt that nothing I could say would be hard or cruel enough."

"Certainly I forgive you, Mr. Grantham. Please say no more about it."

"Philip," exclaimed his mother, "what does all this mean? You cannot surely say that both you and Lord Cosgrave have proposed to this girl?"

"It is the case," said Eva, quietly; "and you see how Lord Cosgrave has taken his mean, pitiful revenge because I refused him. Read that, if you do not trust my word."

And she placed the note which she had received from him just before luncheon in her hands.

Intense amazement mingled with anger was

depicted on that lady's face as she read it. Then she handed it to her daughter.

Lord Cosgrave had tasted the sweets of revenge. Now he began to experience its bitterness. He saw the looks of scorn and contempt, and fully realized what a despicable part he had been playing.

Never had he supposed that Eva would drive him to the fulfillment of his threat. She had done so; his vengeance had been satisfied; but what else had he gained? Nothing but shame and remorse.

"I have only to say to you, my lord," said Mrs. Grantham, turning toward him, "that I hope this is the last time you will ever darken my doors. Henceforth I cannot look on you even as an acquaintance. Good-morning!"

He bowed in silence and left the room.

"Eva!" said Philip, taking her hand.

She hastily withdrew it, and turned from him.

"Eva," he continued, determined that she should hear him, "the mystery is cleared up now. I know all there was to be known, and repeat what I said to you the other day. Here, in the presence of my mother, my sisters, and my uncle, I ask you again if you will be my wife?"

She looked at him in mute surprise. Every one seemed to hold their breath while they waited for her answer.

"You think that you are bound in honor to say this," she replied; "but I cannot accept the sacrifice."

"It is no sacrifice, Eva! Were you a thousand times the daughter of Mark Tremayne, were your father the greatest villain that ever polluted society, I would say the same. I want you, and your love—nothing more."

"Mr. Grantham, again I say it cannot be! I will not bring a tarnished name into any family. I must bear the disgrace alone."

And she left the library, and went up to her own room.

CHAPTER XII.

"OH!" sobbed Janie, throwing herself into her governess's arms, "what am I to do without you? I cannot bear to let you go! No one will ever care for me as you do!"

"Poor little Janie!" said Eva, tenderly kissing the child's tear-stained cheek. "You cannot be more sorry than I am to part from you."

"Why will you not go to live with uncle Henry, or why will you not marry Philip?" continued Janie. "But you are going away where I shall not see you again."

"It cannot be helped, Janie dear," Eva answered. "And now you must not delay me. You know I have only an hour to pack up all

my things, and I want to get away as soon as possible."

"Will you let me help? I would like so much to do something for you," asked Janie, trying to force back her tears.

"Thank you, dear! Well, you put those books and boxes in the bottom of the trunk. That would save me a great deal of trouble."

"Oh, yes! I will put them in so nicely!"

And she set herself to work.

"Miss Taylor!" she exclaimed, presently, in accents of surprise.

"Well, Janie, what is it?"

"Look at this."

And she held up a small sealed package.

Eva snatched it away almost roughly.

"What are you doing with that? Give it to me at once!" she exclaimed.

"I could not help seeing it—indeed I could not. I did not know that it was wrong to look at it. But do you not want it brought to uncle Henry? It is addressed to him—is it not?"

"No; the package is mine, not Sir Henry's."

"But I am sure it is directed to him! He ought to have it."

"Hush! that is my affair, not yours."

"Here is your money, Miss Tremayne," said Mrs. Grantham, appearing at the door of the room. "But what did I hear Janie say that some one ought to have, as I came down the passage?"

Janie hung her head, and did not reply.

"I insist on knowing! Speak this moment, Janie!"

"Only a little parcel, mamma; and I thought I saw uncle Henry's name on it."

"Is that it in your hand, Miss Tremayne?"

"It is," Janie answered.

"Give it to me!"

Eva had not power to resist, and handed it to her.

"More mysteries!" exclaimed Mrs. Grantham. "What is the meaning of your having this in your possession?"

"My father gave it to me when he was dying."

"To give to Sir Henry?"

"Yes."

"And why have you kept it all this time?"

"I am not obliged to give you my reasons, Mrs. Grantham."

"Well, you must give them to Sir Henry."

"I will."

"Come, then."

"Where?"

"To Sir Henry."

Eva followed her back to the library—Janie, full of childish curiosity, accompanying them.

Sir Henry was in the same place on the sofa, still a prey to the violent emotion caused by Lord Cosgrave's revelation.

Mabel sat near him, pretending to read, while Philip stood moodily beside the window.

"Without giving Mrs. Grantham time to speak, Eva knelt down beside the Baronet, and said, quickly: "Sir Henry, I have something to tell you. When my father was dying, he gave me this for you. It is the written account of his crime. 'When he reads it, he will curse me as I deserve to be cursed, and my name will be branded with infamy,' he said. And—oh, Sir Henry!—I loved my father dearly, and could not bear to give it to you; so I hid it away, and meant to keep my secret—not for my sake, but for his. My father said also that in this confession he had taken care to secure my future, and that I should be rich and happy; but I did not want to gain wealth at the price of his good name. As I told you before, I had not an idea what was that crime until Lord Cosgrave declared it. There cannot be much more to learn; still, you may as well read what my father says. But remember that I do not intend to reap any advantage whatever from it."

Sir Henry took the package, and slowly opened it. There was a little missive directed to himself, a small locket attached to a gold chain of exquisite workmanship, and a soft flaxen curl. He opened the locket. It contained two portraits—his own, as a gay and happy man, and that of the young mother, whose likeness hung in the small room off the picture-gallery of The Elms.

Then he broke the seal of the letter; but a mist had gathered on his eyes, and he could not distinguish the contents.

"Read it, Philip—read it aloud," he said, holding it out toward his nephew. "They have heard so much, they may as well hear the rest—if indeed, there be any more."

Philip took the paper from Sir Henry's hand, and read:

"Henry Tremayne, a life, stained with guilt, revenge, and passion, is nearly at an end. My hand is so weak and trembling that I have scarce power to hold the pen; and yet I must write to you, and confess all. You know how we last parted. You may still remember what bitter words passed between us, though I see now that the fault was mine, and not yours. I was a poor man before the lawsuit; after it, I was completely penniless. For myself I did not care. I was accustomed to live from hand to mouth; but I had a wife and child to think of and to provide for. My wife was a frail young creature, totally unfit to rough it with a poor man.

"When I returned to the little French town where I had left her, I found her very ill. There was a celebrated doctor in Paris, who, every one said, could cure her, and she begged me to take her there; but I had no money, and no way of obtaining any. She fretted and pined. 'It is hard to die,' she used to say; 'and I could be cured if we had any money to go to Paris.'

"I think I was mad then—yes, I must have been. It was so harrowing to watch her, and listen to her complaints. And so she died of *loving*, I may say,

while you, Henry, were rolling in wealth—wealth to half of which I believed I had a claim. And I hated you for being rich and happy, while I was so poor and miserable. I returned to England, to The Elms; but you were not there. They told me that you were in Devonshire with your wife and child—wife and child—wealth and position. You had everything, while I had nothing; and when I thought of that, my hatred increased tenfold. I followed you to Devonshire, and walked up the cliff one afternoon, close to the place where I heard you were stopping. Suddenly I arrived near a lady who had evidently come out there to read; but the book had dropped from her hand, and she had fallen asleep. She was your wife, I saw at a glance. I had met her once or twice at the time of the lawsuit. Her child was playing about near her, and I coaxed it to me. It came at once, and I took it in my arms.

"Now was the moment for my revenge. The edge of the cliff was near. I had but to dash it over; but it looked at me and smiled—I could not do it. I would take it far away, where you would never hear of it again. Throwing its hat and some of its clothes over the precipice, I left the place, as I supposed, unseen by any. It was not until three years ago that I discovered that there had been a witness of my theft. I was in a gaming-house at Baden-Baden, when I detected false cards in a player's hand. I accused him of cheating. He dared not deny it, but he whispered into my ear that he not only knew my real name, but also what I had done with your child. I withdrew my charge, and in a few minutes had formed a plan by which I might discover how much he knew, and then effectually silence him. I hurried home, and fetched Eva. We watched for him as he was leaving the gaming-house; then I bade her go and tell him that a countryman of his needed him sorely. Poor child! she believed that she was speaking the truth, and had no difficulty in inducing him to accompany her to our house. He had seen me take the child, and believed that I had killed it. I succeeded in convincing him that it still lived. Then he said that I should restore the child to you; but I refused, and threatened that, should he take any steps in the matter, I would prove that he had followed a course of systematic cheating that evening. A sharp altercation took place. He called me several insulting names. A large knife was lying on the table. I was mad with rage, and, seizing it, rushed on him. At that moment Eva dashed into the room. She grasped my arm, and he escaped. I never heard anything of him after that night; for his own sake he would naturally keep silence as long as he knew that I lived. I do not give you his name; he did not betray me, so I am bound in honor not to betray him. There are witnesses enough to the truth of what I say without him.

"Henry, the child which you have so long mourned as dead, still lives. When I took it away that afternoon my design was to leave it at some place where no one could possibly suspect whose it was. But the little innocent wound itself round my heart, and I longed to be able to bring it up with my own child. Alas! I did not then know that I was never to see my little girl again. When I reached my desolate home, I found that she had been laid beside her mother.

That decided me to keep your little daughter with me; and, had she been my own, I could not have loved her more than I did. She was the only one in the world who cared for me; and, as she grew up, we became all in all to each other. I knew that I ought to restore her to you, but could not do it, Henry—I could not. My life would not be a long one, so I resolved not to part with her as long as it lasted. But now you shall have your own again. The girl who will place this package in your hands is Eva Tremayne, your daughter, and not mine."

There was more writing on the paper, but Philip did not proceed with it further.

Eva was already clasped in her father's arms, and the young man signed to his mother and sisters to come with him and leave them alone.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT a change for Eva! One hour the despised, insulted governess, her only inheritance a father's infamy; the next, the daughter and heiress of Sir Henry Tremayne.

The Gipsy's prophecy had come true, the clouds had lifted, the sun had shone out, and a bright, happy future lay before her.

Proofs of her identity were not wanting. Mark Tremayne had taken care to give the names of several persons who knew of his own child's death, and who remembered how he had arrived a few days afterward with the little stranger, and how angry he had been when he had heard her lisp the name of Eva Tremayne.

In collecting these proofs, Lord Cosgrave's baseness was revealed in its fullest extent.

In every quarter where inquiries were made, it was discovered that his agents had already been at work, and no one could doubt what his true motives were in wishing to make Eva his wife. That plan having failed, he had sought to be revenged, never dreaming that there was a possibility of the truth being discovered.

What his subsequent history was, no one ever knew.

He left the country a disgraced and ruined man, and was never heard of again.

Sir Henry was perfectly happy. Every day

his love for his recovered treasure seemed to increase.

"How was it possible that I did not recognize her before?" he would ask himself again and again. "Is she not the very image of her mother? Why did I not guess that she was our child that first day she came to The Elms, when she sung for me in the gloaming?"

And Eva gave Sir Henry a daughter's truest, tenderest love.

Still, the past was not forgotten. The name of him whom she had so long believed to be her father never passed her lips; but there was no bitterness in her heart when she thought of the wrong he had done her.

Evening shadows are falling; the soft, cool breeze is gently creeping in through the open windows of the old paneled drawing room at The Elms.

Silence reigns all around, broken only now and then by snatches of song from a solitary nightingale, hidden away among the trees down by the side of the river.

In the same room, on the same spot where, but a few days before, she had refused him, stands Philip, and with him Eva. Both are silent. Their happiness is far too deep for words. They know that nothing can come between them now; that all doubt, fear, and suspicion are over forever.

He had loved her nobly and truly; had been willing to make any sacrifice to win her, caring nothing for the shadow which rested on her name.

That shadow has vanished now and forever. A true, pure love is reaping its just reward.

THE END.

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Beadle and Adams, Publishers,
No. 98 William street, New York.